

## Growing Up at the Berlin Zoo

### Episode 29 of *Exile*

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**JOSHUA MALINA:** This episode contains references to suicide. Please take care while listening.

All is quiet at the Berlin Zoo. Nestled in the southwest corner of Berlin's vast central park, the Tiergarten is one of the most prominent zoological institutions in the world. On this summer night, big cats, elephants, hippos, giraffes, bears, and primates sleep, eat, or pace in their enclosures. They're surrounded by grounds landscaped like an English garden, with winding paths, open lawns, and tranquil ponds. Nearby, the grand aquarium murmurs with life. Periodic splashes, croaks, and the steady hum of water pumps fill the air. Inside, crocodiles, snakes, and tropical fish move through their tanks. British pilots have entered German airspace. They have orders to initiate this bombing raid on Berlin, escalating the war against Nazi Germany. Their targets are vital pieces of German infrastructure, like airports and power stations. The raid is meant to intimidate the Nazi regime and bring the war to Berlin's doorstep. But poor visibility and navigational errors send the bombers off course. One of Britain's first bombs to strike the city lands not on a factory or an airfield, but inside the grounds of the Berlin Zoo. The explosion tears through animal enclosures. And one of the first German casualties at the hands of the British is an antelope. Across the ocean in New York City, a young boy named Werner Cohn, doesn't realize one of his favorite places to play in Berlin is under attack.

*THEME MUSIC UP*

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Welcome to *Exile*, a podcast from LBI, the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. I'm Joshua Malina. When everything is taken away, then what? From LBI's archives, untold stories of Jewish lives in the shadow of fascism. Today, a family uncovers their connection to the hidden history of one of Berlin's most iconic institutions.

*THEME MUSIC OUT*

**JOSHUA MALINA:** On August 1, 1844, the Berlin Zoo opened its gates for the first time. Inspired by Enlightenment-era ideals of public education and access to nature, it welcomed visitors from across the city. King Frederick William IV of Prussia had a private menagerie on Peacock Island, an isle on the Havel River in southwestern Berlin, and he donated animals for the new attraction.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** Probably all rulers of the region of Brandenburg, which this part of Germany was called back then, had kept exotic animals at some point in some area of their estate.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** This is Clemens Maier-Wolthausen. He's a German historian and author of Berlin, City of Animals: The story of Germany's oldest and most famous zoo. The Zoo hired him to document its past.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** And we have to imagine this menagerie as, you know, not hosting only peacocks, but lions, bears, some monkeys, kangaroos.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The Zoo was the vision of Martin Lichtenstein, a local physician and explorer, who then became the Zoo's first director. He saw it as a place for education, research, and wonder. Set on 54 acres of former royal land, the Zoo's grounds were laid out to complement the natural setting of the garden, unlike the more rigid, display-focused design of earlier European zoos. In order to accelerate its growth, the Zoo adopted a new approach of the time: selling shares to private citizens.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The concept of a joint stock company was only created in Prussia in 1843, so it was a very new idea, but the founding director Martin Liechtenstein had already, before the Zoo was opened in 1844, thought that the only sustainable way to create a zoo would try to go with one of these new ideas of a stock company.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** In 1845, most Berliners weren't wealthy. Only 200 of the first 500 shares found buyers.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** It needed the creation of the German Empire in 1871 and the economic boom that followed the creation of the Reich to develop Berlin into a rich bourgeois city with enough people in the lower and upper bourgeoisie to actually be interested to buy such a share. The most important next issue was of 1872 when really the first batch of shares was sold and the Zoo had enough to actually prosper, to develop, build new animal houses, and actually hire staff and buy animals.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Once a share was sold, the Zoo had no control over its resale, but did keep a record of ownership. And while Zoo shares didn't pay dividends like commercial company stocks, they did come with a unique benefit: lifetime admission to the Zoo for families. Because of this perk, shares were rarely resold. Instead, they were a cherished asset passed down through generations. This was particularly true for one group of Berliners: Jewish families. When the Zoo opened in 1844, Jewish people had only had citizenship for a couple of decades, so owning a share felt like a gateway into Berlin's cultural and social elite. In time, Jewish families came to hold nearly a quarter of the 4000 shares issued.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The Zoo was not only a place to look at animals, it was a place of high society. The people went to stroll the wide alleys of the Zoo to be seen, to meet and greet people. And for those Jewish families of the bourgeoisie, who started also settling in what later became the borough of Charlottenburg, buying a share, getting the free admission to the Zoo as a benefit of that share seemed to be a good idea and a good chance for networking, simply.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Dr. James Cohn bought Share No. 1114 in 1928 when his son Werner was just 2 years old.

**JONATHAN COHN:** I think it was something that was quite common for upper middle class Jewish families to do. It's sort of a social place that they would meet their friends.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** This is Werner Cohn's son Jonathan.

**JONATHAN COHN:** My grandfather was a doctor and I think they had a comfortable life. I've actually been to Berlin and seen where they lived and his office was in the building that they lived in. And my grandmother worked with him as a nurse.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Jonathan recalls his father enjoyed regular visits to the Zoo as a child.

**JONATHAN COHN:** The house was close to the Zoo. And we understand that it was a place where my dad would meet his friends and play. The playgrounds there and they enjoyed the animals and had favorite animals.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** At the age of 88, Werner was interviewed by historian Monika Schmidt for her book, *The Jewish Shareholders of the Berlin Zoological Garden*. He said one of his favorite animals was a seal named Roland, and described playing on the playground with his older sister, Hilde, while his parents, James and Else Cohn, enjoyed breakfast at the Zoo café. It was the only place in Berlin where James could get soft-boiled eggs prepared exactly how he liked them. And there's a chance that while playing on the Zoo playground, Werner Cohn was joined by a young girl named Marianne Salinger, who was just 2 years older than he was. Marianne's parents also owned a share, and they regularly visited the Zoo until they fled Nazi Germany in 1939, when she was 16.

**MARIANNE SALINGER:** I always say that I grew up in the Zoo. And that is the truth. And the Zoo was very nice, very beautiful. And also something, had concerts in the evening, had restaurants. And I said I'd grow up in the Zoo, and I did. I could go alone. It was one stop in the subway and I was a very reliable child in contrast to my brother. So I could take the subway and go to the Zoo by myself, maybe at the age of six or seven.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** This is Marianne in an interview recorded at the Leo Baeck Institute

in New York. She volunteered there until a few years before her death in early 2025, at the age of 101. In the early-to-mid-'30s, the Berlin Zoo was a bustling center of recreation and socialization for children and adults alike. But with the rise of the Nazi regime, and Hitler's election in 1933, that was all about to change.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** As an historian with long experience researching the Nazi period, I was still very surprised how fast the transition of the Zoo as a company into an institution totally aligned with biologicistic worldview of the Nazis and the Nazi system happened. And I think the central role is that of the director Lutz Heck. He 'Nazified' the Zoo within a year.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Lutz Heck, the Zoo's director, was an enthusiastic Nazi and a close associate of Hermann Göring, one of Hitler's top deputies and head of the German Air Force. He began efforts to "Aryanize" the Berlin Zoo, removing Jews from positions of power and influence. Jewish lawyers Siegmund and Simon were forced out of the Zoo's supervisory board; their non-Jewish colleagues were silenced out of fear. At the time, the Zoo claimed their resignations were voluntary.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** But the truth is that they had been exposed to humiliating discussions at the supervisory board right from the first meeting after the Nazi takeover in January 1933. And Sigmund especially put up a fight. He tried to negotiate. He tried to impress the long history of Jewish charity for the Berlin Zoo on the other members of the board, but that didn't work. At some point, Sigmund and Simon were actually confronted with the threat that if they would not leave the board, Jewish visitors would not be safe from harassment. And that's when they both gave up and left the board.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** So, for the time being, children like Werner and Marianne, along with other Jewish Zoo shareholders and visitors, could still visit their beloved Zoo. At a time when nearly every aspect of Jewish life in Germany was being restricted, the Zoo offered a brief escape. Marianne, for one, was grateful.

**MARIANNE SALINGER:** We couldn't go any place. We couldn't go to the theater. We couldn't go to the concerts. There were signs: "Dogs and Jews

forbidden to enter." We could go to the Zoo. And that is the truth.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Antisemitic pressure continued to grow. In July 1938, under the Reich Citizenship Law, most Jewish doctors were banned from practicing, except the few who were allowed to continue treating Jewish patients. Werner's dad, Dr. James Cohn, a World War I veteran and a doctor in the Kaiser's army, was suddenly out of work. It was a betrayal by his country that he would have struggled to understand. Here's Werner's son Jonathan again.

**JONATHAN COHN:** We have a photograph of him in an officer's uniform from the Kaiser's army in World War I. He worked as a doctor. He looks quite proud to be in the German army.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** As Nazi power and persecution grew, Werner's mother, Else, wanted the family to leave Berlin. But for James, Germany was his home.

**JONATHAN COHN:** There's a very integrated and successful Jewish community in Berlin, as I understand. And gradually, but quite quickly, what we would consider the normal ways of living for them were chipped away at. And I know my grandmother, Else, pressed very hard for them to leave and come to America. And they ended up coming quite late.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** As for many Jewish families, leaving Germany wasn't easy. Stripped of their rights, and most of their assets, the Cohns had to get creative. They managed to track down distant relatives they had never met, who provided affidavits of support that made it possible for them to escape. The Cohn family arrived in New York on October 25, 1938, with almost no possessions. And without their Berlin Zoo share. Escape, even under these conditions, should have been cause for celebration. But for James, it was not.

**JONATHAN COHN:** My Omie, my grandmother, didn't talk a lot about leaving Berlin. I do remember her talking once about it, and sort of explaining how difficult it was for her that she had to do everything. She had to make the arrangements. She had to do all the packing. She had to figure out what to do

with the stuff they couldn't bring. And my grandfather, it seems that he was quite depressed about the whole idea of leaving his country and starting out anew, in English, which, his English was not great.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** They got out just in time. On November 9, just two weeks after their escape, Kristallnacht marked a sharp escalation in attacks on Jewish communities across Germany. After that fateful night, the Zoo no longer needed to hide its agenda toward Jewish visitors. Clemens explains.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** It was startling for me to understand that the Zoo Board, already before the pogrom of the so-called Crystal Night of 1938, tried to ban Jewish visitors. Already in March, April, May 1938, we know that the administrative director of the Berlin Zoo, Hans Amon, asked the deputy Gauleiter of Berlin whether the Zoo would be allowed to ban Jewish visitors. And the Gauleiter cautioned against a public ban, probably because Berlin would still welcome international visitors and the Gauleiter was fearing for the reputation.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** After Kristallnacht, however, pretense gave way to policy. Signs went up barring Jewish visitors from the Zoo, and by late 1938, the Berlin Zoo proudly declared itself “free of Jews.” By then, nearly all the shares once held by Jewish families, symbols of cultural belonging and civic pride, had been transferred into Aryan hands. But how? For nearly a century, the Zoo hadn't held legal authority over the sale of shares. Its official role was only to record changes in ownership in a ledger. Yet, somehow, nearly a thousand shares vanished from Jewish hands quietly, efficiently, and without public record. It would take about 50 years for this mystery to unravel. In 1940, after the allied bomb fell on the Zoo and killed an antelope, the war continued to rage. Even as rationing made animal care increasingly difficult, the Nazi party kept the Zoo open as a symbol of “national pride”. And until November 1943, it was largely spared from the worst of the conflict.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The attack of November 22, 1943, eclipsed everything that had gone before. In that night raid by the British Air Force, probably more than 600 Halifax, Stirling, and Lancaster bombers came to Berlin

dropping an excess of 2000 tons of high explosives. The bombs in that night probably killed around a third of the animals of the Zoo.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Among the animal casualties were a black rhino, an orangutan, several giraffes, two pygmy hippos, and half the antelope and deer. The only survivor in the shattered elephant shelter was the bull, Siam, who lost his entire harem. The following night, bombers hit the Zoo's legendary aquarium.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** And when it exploded, all aquariums inside the building were shattered. You have to imagine floods of water, flooding animals, alligators, fishes, the shark tank, everything was flooded onto the streets in front of the aquarium. Luckily for the Berliners, the crocodiles, because it was a very, very cold night, immediately died. So no escaped alligators in the streets of Berlin, I'm afraid, as well. All those stories about animals freed by the bombing in the Zoo roaming the streets of Berlin are false.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** But it wasn't the bombing that took the lives of most of the animals. It was the ground combat. On April 22, 1945, as Soviet troops closed in, the Berlin Zoo's fences and small buildings made it a perfect defensive position for German troops to retreat to. Employees were conscripted into the Volkssturm, Hitler's militia of older men and teenage boys, and forced to dig trenches and build anti-tank barriers across the once-idyllic gardens. Zookeepers hid in underground bunkers during the shelling, then snuck out at night, risking their lives to try and care for the surviving animals. A week later, when the Russian front line finally breached the grounds of the Zoo, it became a combat zone in the Battle of Berlin. As a last line of defense, the Nazis took over a tower near the hippo house.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** On the top of that tower were mighty anti-aircraft guns. And they would now be used to fire horizontally towards the approaching Soviet forces. And that completely devastated what was still left of the Zoo. We estimate that around ninety animals were alive when the Zoo was finally under Soviet occupation around the 30th of April.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Lutz Heck, like many high-ranking Nazis, fled quietly, while others risked death to feed the remaining animals.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** He fled cowardly, the Zoo which he was responsible for. Not only that, but he also took most of the money the Zoo had in different accounts and transferred them to Munich.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The future of the Zoo hung in the balance. In New York City, far from the destruction of Berlin and its zoo, the Cohn family was trying to rebuild. In order to become a practicing doctor in America, James Cohn had to pass English proficiency tests, and he was struggling.

**JONATHAN COHN:** He had to take some exams as people do, as immigrants do now. You needed to show that not only were you able from the medical side to practice, but that your English skills were also good enough to be a doctor. As I understand it, that was the hardest part for him.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** James failed his first attempt. But he kept studying. It's impossible to say if it was the failed exam, the stress and exhaustion, or the sheer weight of their new circumstance. James died by suicide on February 11, 1940. He was 53. He had not waited for the results of his second test. Werner, only 14 when his father died, did not tell his own son Jonathan very much about that time.

**JONATHAN COHN:** My father didn't talk a lot about his childhood at all. He never talked very much about his life before his father died.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** But the impact on Werner and the family was undeniable and enduring.

**JONATHAN COHN:** My grandfather killing himself was a formative experience for my dad. I'm sure that the whole process of leaving Germany, his father not being able to work, had a big effect on how he saw Berlin and his relationship with the Zoo.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Back in Berlin, despite the devastation, the Zoo managed to reopen its doors within two months of the war's end with the few animals that survived. With all bans lifted and Nazi laws restricting Jewish movement now abolished, anyone could visit, but there were few Jews left in Berlin to enjoy it. And the Zoo was not what it used to be.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The first morning after the battle on the Zoo, a sole hippopotamus was swimming in the pool next to the hippopotamus house. Badly scarred, burned, but he was alive. And I think a lot of Berliners understood that this small hippo called Knautschke was, in a sense, a fellow sufferer. And he became a favorite of the public, of the visitors. They came to the Zoo, they fed him with whatever they could spare. And you have to imagine that the first two winters after the liberation were very hard on the Berliners. People starved, died of starvation, and yet, potato peels, old bread, anything they could spare, they would bring to the Zoo to feed hippo Knautschke.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The Zoo wanted to move past the war's destruction and allowed its grounds to become a beacon of hope and healing for a city destroyed, and a country torn apart. But, the shadows of its past lingered, and the injustices faced by Jewish shareholders remained largely unaddressed. That is, until one day in early 2000, when 74-year-old Werner Cohn started to ask questions. He remembered the Zoo, and his family's share, and with these memories came an impulse to try to right at least one of the wrongs that had befallen his father. Werner wrote the Zoo a letter on March 2, 2000. It was the first in an exchange that can now be found in LBI's archives. It started out friendly.

**WERNER COHN:** Some weeks ago, I was in Berlin and we spoke on the telephone. I mentioned to you that my father, like many other Jews of our acquaintance, had owned stock in the Berlin Zoo and that this stock became somehow lost to our family, and I would now like to learn about the circumstances under which this loss occurred.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The Zoo responded quickly.

**ZOO REPRESENTATIVE:** Dear Mr. Cohn, Thank you for your kind letter of March 2, 2000, to which we would like to respond as follows: Share 1114 was transferred on August 13, 1938. Due to a lack of documentation, it is no longer possible to determine the circumstances under which this transfer took place and the price that may have been paid. Much of our archive was destroyed during the bombing raids, so it is simply impossible to reconstruct these events.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** According to historical records, the Zoo's claim that most shareholder documents had been destroyed during the war was true. We can assume the Zoo knew James Cohn's share was now in the hands of another shareholder because they were asked to re-register their share number in the 1950s. But Werner believed there was more to the story, and that the Berlin Zoo knew it. So he persisted with another letter.

**WERNER COHN:** The key problem is whether or not this sale took place under duress. I am not a lawyer, but it is my understanding that a contract formed under duress is not valid. Given the lawless conditions in 1938 in Germany, and all matters related to Jews, it is questionable at the very least whether this transfer of stock took place under terms that can be legally or morally justified.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The Zoo representatives did *not* take kindly to Werner's implication.

**ZOO REPRESENTATIVE:** It has not been possible to find out more details, but I would like to point out that the shares of Jewish shareholders were never expropriated. Nor is the Zoo aware of a single case in which a share had to be returned to a former Jewish owner on the basis of the Restitution Act. It can therefore be concluded that there was no pressure, coercion, or duress involved in the transfer. Incidentally, the Zoo is completely indifferent to the beliefs of its shareholders, as it welcomes everyone who is interested in the Berlin Zoo. For this reason, there was never any special treatment for Jewish shareholders, not even during the Nazi era.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Werner was shocked by this claim. By then, it was an accepted fact that the Nazi regime systematically expropriated Jewish property through forced sales, taxes, and outright theft. Policies backed by law.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** They panicked. Even back then, they could and should have dealt with Werner Cohn personally and not hired a lawyer. First of all, the question was legit and it was after the turn of this millennium. I mean, Germany had long ago started to face its responsibility and many companies and government institutions had already started research in their own history. So there was an alternative way to react to Werner's questions.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Werner doubled down and responded with his strongest words.

**WERNER COHN:** Let me now state my position succinctly. The alienation of Jewish shares during the Nazi period proceeded under duress, and is therefore wrongful. The Zoo, which was a party to this illegal alienation, has the duty to make restitution, to restore the former Jewish stockholders, or their heirs, to that position which they would have occupied if it had not been for the illegal action of the Zoo during the Nazi period. I therefore decided that I must take further action.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Stepping up the pressure, Werner published the lawyer's letter online.

**JONATHAN COHN:** My dad was quick to respond to slights and ill thought out ideas. So getting a letter from the Zoo that was unresponsive, that didn't recognize his thoughts about it. I think he would be very insulted. It would just spur him on to take more action, more steps, and try to help them to see the error of their ways, and to make things right.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The response to Werner's letter was swift. The media attention finally pushed the Zoo to confront its past. The Zoo commissioned a formal investigation, first led by historian Monika Schmidt, then by Clemens Maier-Wolthausen. Slowly, it came to light that, while the Zoo had no legal control over to whom

shareholders sold, it had taken advantage of Nazi laws to help strip Jewish owners of their shares. Clemens explains.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The available documentation suggests that Jewish shareholders trying to sell their shares to basically get money to flee Germany, contacted the Zoo in the hope that the Zoo would be able to direct them to interested buyers.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Turns out, the Zoo, under Director Lutz Heck, was happy to accommodate them. In some instances, desperate Jewish shareholders were offered well below market value for their shares, and then the Zoo sold them to approved non-Jewish buyers for a profit.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The few documented cases I have actually been able to reconstruct suggest that the Zoo tried to at least turn a profit on those cases when it served as an intermediary between the Jewish shareholders selling it and the future gentile buyer of the share. So they bought it for a low price in between 20% under what I could reconstruct as the going rate at the time, and they would sell it for approximately 20% above the going rate to the new, interested gentile buyer.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** The Zoo maintained it had simply been helping Jewish shareholders. But when Werner began pushing for accountability, the institution was forced to confront the truth. In 2011, it installed a commemorative plaque acknowledging the Jewish shareholders who lost their shares, including Dr. James Cohn. Werner was not impressed with this effort, however, and refused to visit the plaque. In 2015, 15 years after his first letter to the Zoo, Werner explained his objections in an interview with German journalist Daniela Reinsch.

**WERNER COHN:** It's got to be serious. It's got to be more than a token. Now, what they've done so far, namely this little tablet in the Zoo, that is what's called tokenism in the worst possible meaning of that word.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** In the end, Werner also thought financial restitution would be too

little, too late.

**WERNER COHN:** Any one individual now living has very little financial stake or claim. To what his great grandparents may have been a considerable sum divided now by all these different shares that would have to go to grandchildren, great-grandchildren, it would just fizzle out into nothing. And it wouldn't be meaningful.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** What Werner wanted was accountability. So hopefully, the Zoo's most recent efforts, including the publication of Clemens Maier-Wolthausen's book, would have pleased him. Clemens's extensive research finally exposed the truth of how far the Berlin Zoo was willing to bend to Nazi will. And with director Andreas Kniering at the helm, the Berlin Zoo continues to take steps to confront its Nazi past. It has launched initiatives to acknowledge and educate the public about this dark chapter.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** It is true that a younger and more modern director took over and it is not very surprising that he was now open to be transparent and supported the efforts of historians to write about the Zoo's history, hire me, and make the exhibition, make a book, which tells the story in great length and detail.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Clemens's research also led to a permanent exhibition in the Zoo's Antelope House, one of the Zoo's oldest surviving buildings. It opened in December 2016 and explores the Zoo's history, including the dark years surrounding World War II. Years led by Lutz Heck, whose punishment for his atrocities ended up being minimal.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** He never became a zoo director again. He never played an important role in any public institution because his colleagues knew what he had done during the Nazi era, but he lived peacefully ever after and died in the early 1980s.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** So when the Zoo's exhibition opened in 2016, they had to decide what to do with its decades-old bust of Lutz Heck.

**CLEMENS MAIER-WOLTHAUSEN:** The bust of Lutz Heck has now a very clear sign in front of it detailing the Nazi career of that zoo director. We discussed whether we should remove the bust in the Zoo entirely. But I felt that would be like obliterating this part of the Nazi history. I felt, no, the bust must remain there. And a sign should tell every single visitor that Lutz Heck was a racist and Nazi functionary and that he Nazified the Berlin Zoo. And the Zoo did that.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Some justice. Finally. Werner's letters asking about his father's shares marked the beginning of the Zoo's journey toward confronting its past. If Werner could see the efforts being made today, his family hopes he'd feel he played a part in restoring some measure of justice to his father's memory.

**JONATHAN COHN:** I think he was really a model for us in many ways to speak up and to speak out when people say or do things that are misguided, and to not sort of sweep it under the rug. He did believe in trying to help people learn from events.

**JOSHUA MALINA:** Today, more than 3.5 million people visit the Berlin Zoo each year. And now, thanks to Werner Cohn's persistence and deep connection to a place he once loved, where his father had been happy and welcomed friends, the truth of the past is on full display.

*THEME MUSIC UP*

**JOSHUA MALINA:** This episode is dedicated to the memory of Marianne Salinger, who passed away in January 2025. Born in 1923 in Berlin, Marianne fled Germany with her family in 1939 and studied graphic arts at the Cooper Union. She began volunteering at LBI immediately after her retirement in 2001 and translated countless collections, often working with handwritten documents in old German script. She enjoyed coffee and cake in the breakroom at the LBI, where she shared many stories of her life, including memories of the Berlin Zoo. The James Cohn Collection in the LBI archives documents Dr. Werner Cohn's battle for restitution of his family's shares in the Berlin Zoo, including his correspondence with Zoo officials in 2000. The Papers of Gerald M. Friedman, a

former Trustee of the LBI, also document his family's efforts dating back to the 1960s to recover Zoo shares. They include copies of the entire family's photographic Zoo membership cards. Learn more at [lbi.org/exile](http://lbi.org/exile). Exile is a production of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York and Antica Productions. I'm your narrator, Joshua Malina. This episode was written by Joanne O'Sullivan. Our executive producers are Laura Regehr and Stuart Coxe. Our producer is Emily Morantz. Research and translation by Isabella Kempf. Voice acting by Cyrus Lane and Adi Braun. Sound design and audio mix by Philip Wilson. Theme music by Oliver Wickham. This episode of Exile is made possible in part by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Finance and the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future.

*THEME MUSIC OUT*