

## Israeli embassy staff meet in Berlin villa where Final Solution was agreed upon.

In 1942, at the Wannsee Conference, the decision was made to exterminate European Jewry; in the exact same place where senior SS and Nazi officials met, the Israeli Embassy chose to hold its weekly diplomatic meeting, marking Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The Israeli embassy in Berlin held its weekly diplomatic meeting on Tuesday at the villa in which the notorious 1942 Wannsee Conference took place during which plans were drawn up for the annihilation of European Jewry.

At that conference, which was chaired by the staunch Nazi leader Reinhard Heydrich, 14 senior representatives of the SS, the Nazi Party, and various government ministries gathered. The theme of the conference was The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem. Historical research has uncovered that the decision to implement the Final Solution had already been reached, and that the discussion at Wannsee was only intended to coordinate ways of implementation.

As part of the preparation for the conference, Adolf Eichmann compiled a list detailing how many Jews were in various European countries, which he presented to all participants.



(Photo: Ruti Zonetz, Israeli Embassy in Berlin)

January of this year marked 75 years since the conference, and as part of Israel's Holocaust

Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day events, the Israeli embassy decided to hold its symbolic weekly meeting in the same place as the conference.

It was moderated by Avi Nir, an Israeli delegate in Berlin, who opened the meeting with the following remarks: "It is a great, special and exciting privilege to sit here, as the official representatives of the State of Israel in Germany, in the specific room where people, much like us, convened and made an inconceivable decision—to terminate an entire people, to systematically exterminate, to completely destroy without a trace."



(Photo: Ruti Zonetz, Israeli Embassy in Berlin)

The diplomats present at the meeting noted the inconceivable incongruity between the pastoral scenery outside the villa and what happened in that exact same room.

Consul Liora Givon said she felt like she came full circle by sitting "in this eerie room, where that meeting was held, in which Eichmann participated. My father, Raphael Siddur, a journalist and translator, was one of the people who translated the Eichmann trial in Israel and reported it to the world. Today, I live five minutes from where my grandparents lived in Berlin, and opposite the building that served as Eichmann's headquarters."



(Photo: Ruti Zonetz, Israeli Embassy in Berlin)

Dr. Christian Yash, director of the Wannsee villa memorial site, added: "We are in a period that brings many changes to Europe, and we hope that these will not be harmful changes. Where we are, we are trying to serve as a bridge to the past, in order to lead to an understanding of what once was."

The locally operating study center holds seminars for German diplomats, for the German Ministry of Justice and even for German hair designers' schools presenting the guidelines of haircuts during the Third Reich. After the meeting, the embassy staff toured the site.

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<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4954107,00.html>