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HUMANITY AND INHUMANITY:  
UNPRECEDENTED AUCTION LINKS HOLOCAUST WITH CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT  
AT THE HISTORIC FIFTH AVENUE SYNAGOGUE IN NEW YORK CITY  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

KRUMBACH TORAH ARK

As World War II came to a close, US, Russian, and other Allied nations troops entered Nazi death camps, freeing those who had miraculously survived. In their weakened condition, these survivors had nowhere to return, their towns and villages destroyed in the War, and many were moved to Displaced Persons camps. One such camp was located in the Bavarian village of Krumbach, Germany. For survivors gathered there, nothing was more important than the freedom to congregate and celebrate their Judaism, inspiring the Rabbi Menachem Mendel Rubin to create a yeshiva and a synagogue for his people.

Recognizing their plight, members of the US Army Corps of Engineers built for them a Torah Ark, known in Hebrew as an *Aron Kodesh*. Crafted by the US Army Corps out of wood, this Ark held inside a sacred Torah, and above its doors was installed a plaque with the following Hebrew inscription: *"After the decree of killing that God brought about on European Jewry, (survivors) gathered together at displacement camps in Krumbach, Germany. A yeshiva was established for the survivors by the head of the yeshiva, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Rubin and this Aron Kodesh was made and used by the yeshiva and synagogue."*

In the late 1940s, Rabbi Rubin's family and many members of the congregation were able to immigrate to the United States, where they found sanctuary in Brooklyn. With the aid of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Rabbi Rubin and his wife, Rebbetzin Chana Rubin, departed from Bremerhaven, Germany aboard the *SS Marine Flasher* on April 19, 1948, arriving in New York on April 29, 1948. The Rubins were permitted to bring the Krumbach Ark with them in their passage to New York, and it was placed in its new home: Rabbi Rubin's synagogue, Congregation and Yeshiva Yeshurun on Ocean Parkway in Flatbush.

Decades later, the Ocean Parkway Synagogue expanded, and a new ark was built to replace the well-traveled, well-worn Krumbach Ark. In 2002, the Krumbach Ark was gifted from Rabbi Rubin to Rabbi Deutsch of the Living Torah Museum to add to their collection of artifacts from Jewish life spanning from ancient to modern times. Dedicated to providing a better understanding of the Torah, the Living Torah Museum also aids its Brooklyn community by helping feed those in need; however, with donations on the decline, the not-for-profit Museum is struggling. Accordingly, the Krumbach Ark will be sold, accompanied by Rabbi Rubin's medical records from his rescue at the Ebensee death camp at the end of the War.

THE EUGENE B SLOAN CIVIL RIGHTS COLLECTION

The respected Eugene B Sloan was a South Carolina reporter of note during the nation's formative Civil Rights Era. Honored posthumously by the South Carolina TriCentennial Commission with a historic marker placed at his childhood home in Clinton, SC, as well as with the first *Ambrose E Gonzales Award* for

*Distinguished Journalism*, Sloan - always armed with his Sony tape recorder - is remembered for capturing various key moments during the fraught struggle for Civil Rights in the South.

A collection celebrating his life and work will also be sold on Sept. 19. Included in the collection is a truly singular audio piece: a recording never before heard in its entirety of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King addressing an audience at County Hall in Charleston on July 30, 1967, less than a year before his death. Within the speech, he speaks of the injustices of wealth distribution and white supremacy plaguing the nation - subjects once again timely in discussions of the United States - famously instructing those suffering under the yoke of poverty and racism to “build, baby, build” rather than burn (that is, riot). The Martin Luther King address will come in conjunction with the Sony recorder that was used to tape it, as well as with other significant recordings, one of which was taken undercover during a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan the evening before, during which the Grand Dragon Scoggin can be heard calling for Dr. King’s assassination.

#### “VOICES OF INDEPENDENCE”

On Friday, May 14, 1948, the announcement was made of the establishment of the Independent State of Israel. In addition to the Eugene B Sloan Collection and the Krumbach Ark, the auction planned for Sept. 19 will see for offer a historic collection of documents that outline the future of the new Israeli State as envisioned by the 37 members of Israel’s Provisional Council - Moetzet Haam - at the time of this announcement. Formed for the purpose of establishing an independent Jewish State, each of the council’s 35 men and two women eventually signed the scroll that would act as the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

The ideas put forth in these individual documents are those that shaped and that continue to shape the Israeli State, as written by the men and women who declared their independence in 1948. Included are original, signed statements from all 37, among them David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the newly-formed State and the man who first read the Declaration aloud from hand-written notes at a secret meeting held at the Tel Aviv Museum (now known as Independence Hall), and Golda Meir, one of only two women to sign the scroll, as well as, later in life, Israel’s fourth Prime Minister.

#### OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE

Limited to a few select lots, the auction will give bidders the opportunity to purchase a collection of remarkable letters written by Marc Chagall during and after the Holocaust, along with a rare self-portrait of Chagall. The letters, alternatively signed “Marc Chagall” and “Chagalls,” are of correspondence between the Chagalls and Gen. Morris C. Troper and Mrs. Ethel Troper, both eminent figures of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee who were instrumental in helping the Chagalls immigrate to the United States in 1941. Also present will be an archive of personal correspondence from Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan, close friend of David Ben-Gurion and symbol of strength for the emerging Israeli State, all dating between 1938 - 1969.

Guernsey’s, the New York City-based auction house, has been honored to take on the humbling task of curating these significant items at an auction taking place on September 19, 2019, at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in New York City. Please contact Guernsey’s at 212-794-2280 if you have an item related to the Holocaust and or Civil Rights Era that you would like to discuss.