



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Media and Public Relations
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Authors Discuss Their Books about Notorious Nazis' Crimes and Fates

MAHWAH, N.J. – On Thursday, February 18 at noon, Dr. Daniel Lee, author of *The SS Officer's Armchair: Uncovering the Hidden Life of a Nazi*, and Philippe Sands, Q.C., author of *The Ratline: The Exalted Life and Mysterious Death of a Nazi Fugitive* (Knopf, 2021) will discuss "Nazi War Criminals: Their Crimes and Fates." The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Ramapo College is sponsoring the event that will be delivered remotely; Gross Center Director Michael A. Riff will serve as moderator for the event.

Registration to attend via Zoom is at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nazi-war-criminals-their-crimes-and-fates-tickets-136716012273>

The S.S. Officer's Armchair is an enthralling detective story that began at a dinner party in Florence, Italy, when historian Daniel Lee, an expert of the Holocaust, was told about the discovery by an upholsterer in Amsterdam of a bundle of swastika-covered documents inside the cushion of an armchair he was repairing. The documents belonged to Robert Griesinger, a lawyer from Stuttgart, who joined the S.S. and worked at the Reich's Ministry of Economics and Labor in Nazi-occupied Prague during the war. Griesinger's role in Nazi crimes comes into focus as Lee follows the footsteps of a rank-and-file Nazi official seventy years later, and chronicles what became of him and his family at the war's end.

The Ratline delves into the escape from justice of Otto von Wächter, Nazi party and a high-ranking S.S. member, who became governor of Kraków in 1939 and then of Galicia in 1942. In 1945, wanted by the allies for "mass murder [of Jews], shootings and executions...", von Wächter evaded capture, surviving as a fugitive for three years in the Austrian Alps before coming under the protection of a Vatican bishop. Hiding in Rome as an anonymous tenant in the Vigna Pia monastery, von Wächter waited for safe passage via the secret channels by which Nazi refugees were trafficked to Argentina along "the ratline." Three months later, von Wächter is

taken ill under mysterious circumstances and dies four days later, leaving many questions unanswered. Through an unlikely friendship with his youngest son, Horst, Sands looks for answers in what is morally unsettling and mesmerizing terrain.

Daniel Lee, senior lecturer in Queen Mary University London's School of History, received his graduate education at the University of Sussex and hold a doctorate in History from Oxford University. His previous book was *Pétain's Jewish Children*. As a *BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinker*, Lee is a regular broadcaster on radio.

Philippe Sands, a founding member of London's Matrix Chambers and a specialist in international law, appears as counsel and advocate before many international courts and tribunals, including the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court. He is the author of seventeen books on international law, including *Lawless World* (2005) and *Torture Team* (2008). His book *East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (2016), on which he spoke at Ramapo College, has been awarded numerous prizes, including the 2016 *Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction*. Sands received his legal education at Cambridge University and, in addition to numerous visiting appointments, was a visiting scholar the Harvard University Law School.

For further information or to request disability-related accommodations for this event, please contact holgen@ramapo.edu or call 201-684-7409.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, has been named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on *Niche.com*, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master's Doctor of Nursing Practice.

