

THE HOLOCAUST CHILD SURVIVORS OF CONNECTICUT

Organizational News:

Hanukkah party 2016



Our annual Hanukkah party was held at Agudath Sholom Synagogue on December 25th, 2016. It was a beautifully catered event, by Simply Elegant.

Photo Above, left to right:
Agnes Vertes, Judy Altmann,
Peter Lillienthal, Anette
Bohrer



From right to left: Manny Lobel, Bonnie Lobel, Betty Deutsch and her granddaughter



From left to right: Vera Blau,
Aniko & Andy Sarkany



Doris Weiss sang and her husband accompanied her on the piano. They played many wonderful Yiddish songs.



Holocaust Denial and Distortion: The Growing Threat to Historical Memory

On May 10th, 2017, Mark Weitzman, who is the Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) and the Chief Representative of the SWC to the United Nations in New York spoke at Temple Israel in Westport, CT. He is a fabulous speaker and spoke about Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism.

Mr. Weitzman is a member of the official US delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Authority (IHRA) where he chairs the Committee on Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial. He spearheaded IHRA's recent adoption of the "Working Definition of Anti-Semitism" which is the first definition of anti-Semitism with any formal status and was the lead author of the "Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion" which has also been adopted by the 31 member countries of the IHRA.

NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE at the Museum of Jewish Heritage presents



AMERIKE - THE GOLDEN LAND

JULY 4, 2017 - AUGUST 6, 2017

Conceived by Moishe Rosenfeld and Zalmen Mlotek
Directed by Drama Desk Nominee Bryna Wasserman

The musical journey of an immigrant people as told through the songs and stories which inspired and sustained generations who built new lives in the land of the free. In Yiddish with English and Russian supertitles.

AMERIKE
THE GOLDEN LAND

TICKETS \$35 - \$50
Visit NYTF.org for tickets
or call 212-213-2120 Ext. 206
or Ext. 204 for groups

On July 23rd we traveled to lower Manhattan by a comfortable chartered coach bus to the Yiddish theater which is located in the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The performance of "Amerike- the Golden Land" was fabulous. For those who do not understand Yiddish there was English and Russian translation. The actors sang the popular songs of olden days and danced beautifully. We laughed and cried at the stories that touched all of us. We agreed to visit the Yiddish theater again next year and we hope you will join us. See below for a review on Huffington post.

"Amerike is a beautiful piece of theatre. It's everyone's story. It's a collection of stories of an immigrant people as they strive to build a new life while continuing the traditions that made them who they are. With a score that weaves in beloved popular songs of the day, the show recreates an authentic New York City soundscape- from the Lower East Side to the outer-borough neighborhoods where the Jewish population gravitated. The stories it tells are based on the lived experience of real immigrants who faced the heart-wrenching challenges of leading a life they knew to begin again in an unfamiliar land."

World Federation Of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants

- 29th Annual Conference of Child Survivors, Second and Third Generations, Spouses & Families
- Dan Hotel, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem
- Sunday November 5- Wednesday November 8, 2017
- Registration: www.holocaustchild.org
- Fee: \$400/person, after 9/1/2017 it goes up to \$425/person



Greg Wall, a Rabbi from the synagogue Beit Chaverim in Westport, CT is a world-class saxophone player, and has agreed to perform jazz for our members. The date has not been set, although it will likely be after the high-holidays this fall. We will keep you posted regarding this exciting event.

2017 Annual Picnic



We will have our annual picnic at Lou Reen's house in Wilton, CT August 13th at 1PM. Simply Elegant will cater. Please RSVP to Agnes Vertes or Judith Altmann before August 4th. Photos to follow in the next newsletter.

MEMBERS

Membership News

Andy Sarkany was honored by his synagogue this year in New Haven, CT. Agnes Vertes was there to support him. He has been on the board of directors of his temple for over ten years and participates in many of the synagogue's projects. He has organized a number of fund raisers and he serves as the treasurer of the temple. Congratulations Andy!

David Steinberger turned 105 on June 14th. He and his wife Fani are in the Jewish home on Park Avenue in Bridgeport. Despite being in a wheelchair and having some difficulty hearing, David is in great health! Fani will turn 95 in September. Congratulations to David and Fani.



New members:

Kelly Berger- Kelly joined our board as our secretary. She is from Montreal, Quebec and now practices as a physician assistant in Manhattan. Kelly is third generation. Her grandparents were from Poland and immigrated to Montreal after surviving the Holocaust.

Helen Chodroff- Helen is second generation. She was born in Krakow, Poland and came to the US at the age of eighteen. Her mother, her aunt and her great uncle survived the Holocaust hidden under a bunker for 28 months after escaping the ghetto.

Our condolences to the families of members who passed away within the past few months:

Paula Reens, Lou Reen's wife

Hedy Kopecki

Michael Bolgar

May their memory be for a blessing

Congratulations to Marissa Vertes, granddaughter of Agnes Vertes, who graduated from UMASS Amherst May 13th, 2017 with a degree in Healthcare Management.

Congratulations to Juliette Altmann, granddaughter of Judy Altmann, who graduated from Fordham University with a degree in Journalism.

Speakers:

Judy Altmann
Agnes Vertes
Betty Deutsch
Andy Sarkany
Manny Lobel

Over 11,000 students in over 70 schools reached this school year.



Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen issued the following major statement, to coincide with the upcoming Claims Conference-Germany negotiations. As usual, she has exhibited extraordinary courage, wisdom, and humanity in taking this bold stand in order to require Germany, and the Claims Conference, to finally take an honest approach at this critical time in the lives of survivors.

Statement by Ros-Lehtinen:

“Last fall, both the House and the Senate unanimously agreed that Germany must do more to ensure that all Holocaust survivors can live their remaining years in the comfort and dignity that they deserve. We urged our partners, Germany, to reaffirm its commitment to comprehensively address the medical, mental health, and long-term care needs of survivors by guaranteeing full funding to meet those needs. [Continued next page →](#)

CLAIMS CONFERENCE



Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA (HSF) Statement In Response to Claims Conference-Germany Negotiations – July 13, 2017. Contact: David Schaefer, President (305) 742-8501:

Shame on this group of people who say they are negotiating and come up with these pitiful results while these survivors apparently are expected somehow to survive with no care for yet another year of suffering. Why is there no outcry by our Jewish community as the Congress was quickly able to do so in their powerful resolutions last year? The arrogance of this group unwilling to provide the assistance so clearly needed yet again, while declaring victory for small improvements, is wrong. This ongoing tragedy of survivors in need is horrid and in the name of basic decency must somehow be honestly addressed to alleviate the ongoing human tragedies we face every day among our brothers and sisters in need.

Survivors are appalled that, once again, the Claims Conference is not increasing funds for emergency services -- medicines, certain medical procedures, life-critical and expensive dental care, hearing aids, wheelchairs, transportation to the doctor, and other services that survivors need in many cases to survive. These are desperately and widely needed by Holocaust survivors and obscenely underfunded. Continued →

Now Germany has an opportunity to step up when it concludes its upcoming negotiations with the Claims Conference, and the Claims Conference leaders must recognize that Germany can do more for survivors. Those leaders at the Claims Conference must not accept anything less than a comprehensive, permanent, and accountable commitment to fully fund survivors' medically prescribed needs. Allowing once again for a modest increase when so much more is needed is not consistent with Germany's past statements of responsibility, which would defeat the purpose of the Claims Conference, and would tragically force tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors to continue to suffer when we all know the resources exist to provide the care and dignity that survivors worldwide deserve. I urge the Claims Conference and the German government to do the right thing and not settle for anything less than what is really and truly needed."

Finally, the announced increase in home care funding, once again, conceals the greater scandal of grossly insufficient funding for home care. \$462 million seems like a lot, but is tragically low when compared with survivors' actual real-life needs, and when spread across the 67,000 survivors worldwide the CC said it served last year.

A Forgotten Suitcase: The Mantello Rescue Mission



Around 2005, a woman found a mysterious suitcase in her basement in Geneva, Switzerland. Inside the suitcase were more than one thousand World War II-era certificates bearing the official seal of the Consulate of El Salvador. The certificates also featured the photographs of men, women, and children. What were these documents? Why were the decades-old official papers of a Central American nation lying forgotten in a Swiss basement? How many of these documents reached their intended recipients? Their history reveals one of the largest scale, yet least known, rescue attempts of the Holocaust.

George Mandel was a Hungarian Jewish businessman who befriended a Salvadoran diplomat, Colonel José Arturo Castellanos, in the years leading up to World War II. After Castellanos was named El Salvador's Consul General in Geneva, he appointed Mandel, who had assumed a Spanish-sounding version of his last name, "Mantello," to serve as the Consulate's first secretary. Even in Nazi-occupied Europe, Jews who were citizens of or held official documents from other countries were often able to escape deportation. With the consent of Castellanos, George Mandel-Mantello used his diplomatic position to issue documents identifying thousands of European Jews as citizens of El Salvador. He sent notarized copies of these certificates into occupied Europe, in the hope of saving the holders from the Nazis.

Copies of the certificates were sent by diplomatic courier throughout wartime Europe. They were sent to almost every country in occupied Europe, some even to French internment camps, Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, and Auschwitz in Poland. After the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944, the production of certificates accelerated. In total, Mandel-Mantello may have issued as many as five thousand certificates, many with the names and photographs of several family members.

Enrico Mandel-Mantello, the son of George Mandel-Mantello, donated the original certificates to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum after they were found.

If you or someone you know received a Salvadoran citizenship certificate, please contact Judith Cohen, Director of Photographic Reference Collection, at jcohen@ushmm.org.

What the Last Nuremberg Prosecutor Alive Wants the World to Know



In case you missed it, Ben Ferencz, the last surviving prosecutor from the Nuremberg Trials, was recently interviewed by Lesley Stahl on 60 minutes. He is 97 years old, barely 5 feet tall, and still has the stamina and energy of a kid. Ben isn't content just to be part of 20th century history - he believes he has something important to offer the world right now.

Continued →

Because of Ben, 22 SS officers were proven guilty and prosecuted. He recalls looking at the officers in the courtroom and their faces were blank, as if they were waiting for a bus. He remembers he was churning, and is still churning to this day.

Lesley Stahl asked him if he met a lot of people who perpetrated war crimes who would otherwise have been normal, upstanding citizens. His answer was of course. "These men would never have been murderers had it not been for the war. These were people who could quote Goethe, who loved Wagner, who were polite". Ben revealed that he does not believe that they were savage beasts, rather intelligent, patriotic human beings who were acting in the interest of their country. **"War makes murderers out of otherwise decent people. All wars, and all decent people"**.

Ferencz has spent the rest of his life trying to deter war and war crimes by establishing an international court – like Nuremburg. He never stops pushing his message and he's donating his life savings to a Genocide Prevention Initiative at the Holocaust Museum. He says he's grateful for the life he's lived in this country, and it's his turn to give back.

If anyone needs anything in confidence you may call Agnes Vertes 203-226-3092

HOLOCAUST CHILD SURVIVORS OF CONNECTICUT

Agnes vertes
20 Tubbs Spring Court
Weston, CT 06883

Agnes Vertes, *President*
Judith Altmann, *Vice President*
Kelly Berger, *Secretary*
Nicholas Friedman, *Treasurer*

