The Holocaust Child Survivors of Connecticut

We are the Jewish children who survived Hitler’s killing machines. Our group is indispensable in helping us deal with our loss and our pain. We also come together to celebrate our existence and our survival. We are involved in teaching the Holocaust to schools and interested groups. It is our firm conviction that our story must be told so that it will never be

Organizational News

Events

A Musical Salute to Molly Picon

On Sunday, September 29th we had a musical event at Temple Israel in Westport. A Musical Salute to Molly Picon. Our presenter was Dr. Diane Cytkin accompanied by pianist Lena Panfilova. Dr. Cytkin talked about the life of the first lady of the Yiddish Theater and then entertained us with some of the songs Molly Picon wrote and performed.

Hanukkah Party

In 2013 there was a very rare occurrence Hanukkah and Thanksgiving coincided. We celebrated Hanukkah together on Sunday, November 24 at Temple B’nai Israel in Bridgeport, CT. We had great pastries and other goodies. There was a raffle and everybody had a good time.

New Years Party

Sixty of us welcomed the new year on Sunday, January 5th at the home of Lou and Paula Reens. There was great Klezmer music to entertain us. We had a delicious lunch catered by Garelick and Herb. And of course, while noshing we enjoyed schmoozing with our friends.

Save the Date!

On Monday, March 3rd at 2pm we will gather at the Westport Library to hear Mark Weitzman, director of government affairs of the Simon Wiesenthal Center speak about: Anti-Semitism Today. What Are We Doing About It.

On Sunday, April 6th at Temple Israel in Westport we will have Andre Aelion Brooks speak about The Bad Boy of the Jewish World: Spinoza.
Organizational News continued

2013 World Federation Meeting

In November 2013 Agnes Vertes and Judith Altmann represented you at the annual meeting of the World Federation of Jewish Child Holocaust Survivors and Descendants in Henderson, Nevada. Representatives of the Second Generation now sit on the board. They discussed how to integrate their programs with the survivors.

Greg Schneider, executive vice president of the Claims Conference spoke to the board about the next meeting that will take place in Berlin, Germany in August 2014. He told us that after the meeting they will set up a dinner with some important German legislators and a few of us to talk to them about the experiences of those of us who were children during the Holocaust. Greg said many of the younger generation are not that familiar with our suffering during that time. According to Greg this would help convince them to vote for some compensation for child survivors. I hope to attend that meeting and lobby on your behalf telling some of your stories.

Among the many sessions available Judith and I chose to attend the one that dealt with how will Holocaust education continue after the survivors are gone. The information we collected we forwarded to Ann Cohn who heads the second generation group in CT.

Kristalnacht was commemorated together with the Jewish community of Henderson. For this occasion a cattle car was exhibited in back of the hotel.

Membership News

Sunday, October 20th, 2013 Judith Altmann was honored by ADL at Temple Sholom in Greenwich, CT.

Sunday, November 10, 2013 Anita Schorr was honored by ADL at Temple Israel in Westport, CT.

Mazal tov to Serge and Barbara Vinograd on the marriage of their daughter Cassandra to Adam Cohen. The wedding took place on September 1, 2013 at the Vinograd home in Fairfield with Rabbi Orkand officiating. The young couple is living in London.

We wish a refuah shlema to Zofia Schulman who has been released from the hospital and is now cared for at home.

We are delighted that both David and Fani Steinberger are well on the way to recuperate from falls. David broke his arm, but is mending slowly. Fani broke her hip and had a successful operation and is walking quite well by now. They are now both residing in the Jewish Home on Jefferson Street in Fairfield, CT.

Congratulations to Marissa Vertes, granddaughter of Agnes Vertes, who began her first year at the University of Massachusetts, Amhurst.

Kudos to Marissa Altmann, granddaughter of Judith Altmann, who is joining the Peace Corps in March for two years in Mexico.

Hanukkah party at Temple B’nai Israel. From left to right: Anita Schorr, Marian Nachman, Judith Altmann and Lou Reens
**FDR and the Holocaust: A Breach of Faith**

A book by Dr. Rafael Medoff

*Fearful of Jewish ‘domination’ and ‘overrepresentation,’ his vision of America Did not allow for too many Jews.*

Dr. Rafael Medoff is founding director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, a research and public education institute based in Washington, D.C. In 2013 his fourteenth book appeared with the title “FDR and the Holocaust: A Breach of Faith”.

In his research Dr. Medoff found numerous remarks in which U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke about the danger of allowing Jews in large numbers to live in one specific place, or to become too prominent in various professions.

He also promoted imposing a quota on the admission of Jewish students to Harvard in the 1920’s.

In 1943, Roosevelt endorsed a plan by one of his senior advisers to ‘spread the Jews thin all over the world’ so they would quickly assimilate. He also claimed, in 1938, that the Jews were too prominent in Poland’s economy, suggesting that this was the cause of anti-Semitism there. This helps explain why Roosevelt refused to allow Jewish refugees to enter the U.S. up to the limit of the existing laws. Fearful of Jewish ‘domination’ and ‘overrepresentation,’ his vision of America did not allow for too many Jews.

He knew that it would have been unpopular to propose liberalizing America’s immigration quotas. Yet changing the quotas was not necessary to save Jewish refugees. All Roosevelt had to do was quietly tell the State Department – which was in charge of immigration – to allow the existing quotas to be filled. This would have been in accordance with the law, so opponents would have been hard-pressed to muster a serious argument against it.

Roosevelt refused to support the Wagner-Rogers bill of 1939, which would have permitted the entry of 20,000 German Jewish children outside the quota system. Those children would not have taken away any jobs, an argument often heard regarding allowing more immigrants in. Yet only one year later, Roosevelt personally intervened to enable thousands of British children to come to America to escape the German blitz of London.

There were 190,000 unused quota places from Germany and Axis-occupied countries during the Hitler years. The annual quota from Germany – about 26,000 until 1938, 28,000 thereafter – was filled during only one of Roosevelt’s twelve years in office. Most other years, it was less than one-quarter filled.

**FDR continued on page 4.....**

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**A Remembrance Of The Holocaust In Hungary**

*70th Anniversary Exhibition at the United Nations Headquarters, NY*


The exhibit presents a historical account of the Hungarian Holocaust in observance of the 70th anniversary of the deportation and extermination of the Hungarian Jews. The exhibit presents the greatest Hungarian tragedy of the last century through photographs and facsimile documents.

The first panel evokes the elements of coexistence and assimilation that characterized Jewish Hungary during the era until World War I.

**Exhibit continued on page 7.....**
FDR continued from page 3...

“Roosevelt could have done other things which would have saved victims of the Holocaust.

-"He could have pressured the British to open Palestine’s doors to Jewish refugees.

-"He could have authorized the use of empty troop supply ships to bring refugees to the U.S. temporarily, until the end of the war.

-"Roosevelt could have permitted refugees to stay as tourists in a U.S. territory such as the Virgin Islands, until it was safe for them to return to Europe.

He could have also authorized the bombing of Auschwitz or the railway lines leading to it, which would have interrupted the mass-murder process.

The issue of the failure to bomb Auschwitz never seems to go away, because in many ways it sums up America’s refusal to make even a minimal effort to interrupt the mass murder process. U.S. planes were flying just a few miles from the gas chambers, hitting German oil factories. Yet the administration never ordered them to drop a few bombs on the death camp.

The reasons for the failure to bomb Auschwitz, and the ways in which the Roosevelt administration misled the groups requesting such bombing, offer many important lessons for dealing with today’s global problems such as the Obama administration’s lax policy on the development of Iran as a nuclear power.

Medoff concludes: “Roosevelt deserves credit for lifting America out of the Great Depression and his leadership in World War II, but he was not the humanitarian and champion of ‘the forgotten man’ that he claimed to be – at least not when it came to the Jews.”

Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA

Florida survivors founded this organization trying to get some justice for survivors fighting for the rights of survivors to be able to take to court insurance companies who refused to pay the insurance their murdered relatives obtained before the Holocaust. The organization has also appealed to the Special Master in New York State to review the unjust distribution of funds by the Claims Conference. They confronted vice president Biden at a Florida campaign stop in 2012 and told him how badly the administration treated survivors. He promised to take matters into his own hands and do everything possible for survivors. As a result recently the White House announced a program to deal with survivors problems consulting with the Claims Conference. The Administration’s solution is one employee at the Department of HHS and Vista volunteers.

Jack Rubin an executive committee member of the Holocaust Foundation USA wrote a letter

Foundation cont. on page 5...

Anti-Semitism in Hungary

Recently a statue of the regent, Miklos Horthy, was unveiled in Budapest. The ceremony brought out the members of the violently anti-Semitic Jobbik Party to celebrate this event. The counter demonstration of Jews, who put on the yellow star for the occasion was kept away by police.

The Hungarian Parliament has a significant number of representatives from the Jobbik party. Not too long ago one representative of the Jobbik suggested in Parliament to create a list of Jews who they consider “dangerous to the country”.

70th Anniversary

Hungary was occupied by Germany on March 19, 1944. That date is etched in the memory of everybody who was there at the time much like 9/11 in the United States. Although most males were already in work camps mostly on the Russian front, and many of them killed by that time, the mass deportation of the rest of the Hungarian Jews began after that date.

Second Generation

Our second generation group is meeting on the second Tuesday of every month. They decided on calling the group: Linking Generations of the Shoah. Ann Cohn is doing a wonderful job planning programs and attracting more members. It was delightful to see many of them joining us at our New Year’s Day event.
to vice president Biden about this disappointing decision. "We are angry beyond words that instead of honoring survivors and our experiences, your people totally abandoned us and shockingly embraced the very same organizations whose policies are responsible for so much of the torment survivors are suffering today. How could you let this Happen Mr. Vice President? The Claims Conference and the Jewish Federations did not come to you to tell you about the anguish of the survivors and their vast unmet needs- I did. Why did your office turn its back on us, the survivors and devise a plan of action that not only ignores our point of view, but is ridiculous in principle and in possible impact. We trust your goodwill and honest desire to do what is right – but fear you have been misled by others into making a big mistake."

The result was that Jack Rubin was invited to meet with the Senate Select Committee on Aging Hearing on January 15 chaired by Senator Bill Nelson of Florida. They only allowed one survivor to testify and since Senator Nelson is from Florida Jack Rubin from Florida was the obvious choice. Jack illustrated the healthcare needs of survivors and the impact of funding shortfalls. This would be included in the senate record and hopefully the basis for pressure on Germany, the Claims Conference and the insurance companies for an immediate increase in funding for survivors’ needs.

Here are quotes from Rubin’s testimony in the Senate.

"As you know from our struggles dating back to the late 1990s, we survivors have tried everything we know to lift our brothers and sisters out of this grinding poverty and little has worked.

Instead, we have been blocked everywhere we have turned, in court cases right up to the Supreme Court, in Congress, and even seeking proper funding directly from Germany. The small and inconsistent gains in funding for survivors over the years from Germany, channeled through the Claims Conference, are delivered in uneven and we believe inadequate ways, and we still see the poverty and misery at tragically high levels today.

Some 55,000 Holocaust survivors in the United States today live near or below the official federal poverty level. This is tragic and unacceptable. We believe that a serious assessment by this Committee of the actual cost of needed in-home care and basic emergency services such as medicines, dental care, hearing aids, food, rent, utilities, transportation, and other vital services will show a multi-billion dollar deficit.

The Holocaust survivors in this country strongly believe even at this very late date, we must return to the origins of Chancellor Adenauer’s promise in the 1950’s when he said that modern Germany must take care of the all of the needs of survivors due to the savage actions of the predecessor government, the Nazi German regime, with the death camps, the labor camps, medical experiments, torture, and other crimes which have left this tragic legacy till this very hour. Because of the horrible deprivations, survivors’ mental and physical health care needs are more extensive, more complex, and more dire than other elderly people, and require serious, comprehensive responses. Unfortunately, the existing system has fallen tragically short of what survivors need and deserve.

The current funding and care delivery system is difficult for survivors to access, and also severely underfunded.

The United States did not cause survivors' extensive problems we experience today, and neither did the Jewish community. Looking to these sources is wrong in principle and wrong because it will never yield the amount of funds actually needed to provide for the needs of survivors today.

Here are some examples collected from South Florida and other communities throughout the U.S.:

- Emergency funds are capped at $2,500 per year per survivor. That is a cap, not a guarantee. Most survivors get less every year because of limited funds that have to be divided among many survivors with emergencies.

The result is that many, many hearing impaired survivors in their late 80’s are expected
to manage with no or only one hearing aid?

- Most survivors have extensive dental needs because during the Holocaust, we had no opportunity to care for our teeth, suffered extreme malnutrition, as well as beatings and other horrible deprivations. Unfortunately, dental services are paid for from the same emergency funds that are limited to $2,500 per year. And the dental work that many survivors need costs thousands and thousands of dollars. Some dentists give pro bono help in some cities, but this is very limited. I see and hear story after story where survivors cannot get the gum surgery, or extensive dental work they need because there is no money. This is a very, very big problem. The lack of proper dental care harms survivors' dignity, and also puts them at risk for bad nutrition and cardiac problems.

- Widows and widowers who live alone cannot get home care from Medicare if they don’t spend a certain number of nights in the hospital, and after many operations are told they should have help at home even if they were only in the hospital overnight. Yet the rationing of home care funds puts these survivors in danger.

- Social workers and survivors involved in the advisory committees have heard this question far too often: “Do I take my medication or do I buy food?” There are limited funds that must cover a broad range of needs.

“Should the agency take care of every need of a few survivors, or take care of some needs of many survivors?” Under the current framework, these questions are inevitable. Rationing is inevitable. Why does it have to be this way?

**Doing the Math to Properly Analyze Recent German Home Care Announcement**

Senator Nelson, as you are well aware, in-home care is vital for survivors as they cannot be institutionalized easily whether it be a nursing home or mental health facility, which conjures up for most survivors the most bitter memories of the way the Nazis treated us. There could be nothing worse than having to be institutionalized after all we experienced.

The grandstanding, fractured, and irrational, bi-annual announcements of Claims Conference-German secret negotiations have got to stop as the means of caring for survivors once and for all. It should be replaced by the serious solution sought by the survivors who have pleaded for this for nearly 15 years of agony and endless suffering and inability to lift their brothers and sisters in need into a reasonably comfortable and dignified quality of life, and having watched as so many survivors died in agony these past 15 years while those in power ignored or failed to grasp the seriousness of our plight. The above suggested process is the only way once and for all to set the process right and kill poverty among our ranks before it is too late.

**Survivors Are Not Asking for Help from U.S. Taxpayers**

Mr. Chairman, we want to also be clear that Holocaust survivors are not asking for more help from the U.S. taxpayers. Survivors already benefit from many programs for the elderly, and should continue to do so. We hope these can be made better for all elderly in the U.S. However, U.S. taxpayers are already burdened enough, and soon 10 million American baby boomers will be turning 65 every year for the foreseeable future. Shaving off thin slices of these precious funds which themselves have been sequestered and cut along with regularly targeted funds added would make it tragic for survivors to be inserted in that long line of those seeking ever smaller funds. Survivors are fiercely independent and never wanted to rely on their fellow Americans for a penny of assistance. These same survivors now have to ask for help because they can no longer care for themselves.

But the United States did not cause the problems survivors face today — Germany did.

Holocaust survivors endured ghettos, starvation, disease, concentration camps, killing factories, and death marches. We came to the United States and became proud and productive American citizens. Many survivors served this country in combat in Korea and Vietnam. I myself am a U.S. military veteran. Why do retired German WWII veterans and even SS officers receive ample pensions and complete health care coverage, when Holocaust survivors are forced to choose between paying for food or medicine, and cannot pay for dental care, home care, utilities,
The exhibit describes how the country’s political leadership later used Jews as scapegoats for the country’s loss in the Great War. Between 1938 and 1944, several restrictive laws and decrees were passed; the Jewish community was gradually disempowered as they lost their livelihoods, and many were pressed into forced labor.

In 1944, the collaborationist Sztójay government forced Hungarian Jews to wear a yellow Star of David, imprisoned them in ghettos, deprived them of their property and deported them to concentration camps. One in every ten Holocaust victims, and one in every three victims of the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, was a Hungarian citizen. The exhibit, along with familiar images from the Auschwitz album, presents witness testimonies. The exhibit also introduces the resistance and the deeds of rescuers: 806 Hungarians and several foreign diplomats serving in Budapest made demonstrable efforts to help the persecuted.

The closing part of the exhibit presents the assistance given to the deported returning to their countries, as well as data on restitution issues.

As a survivor I am sick as are my colleagues that these taxpayer funds of HHS, and others are being contemplated for use for us and our brothers and sisters when we insist Germany’s full responsibility to provide the actual costs of all the services remains a moral and a practical imperative.”

The Hungarian government transferred money to the Claims Conference to help Hungarian survivors. However, the deadline is February 15 and the Claims Conference rules apply as far as income is concerned and there is a $23,000 cap on assets. Call Henny Schwartz at JFS New Haven 203-389-5599 x111. If you need other help please call Agnes Vertes: 203-226-3092.

The commemoration began with an event at UN headquarters on the morning of January 23rd in partnership with the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program. The invited speakers were Ambassador Mr. Csaba Korosi representing Hungary, Dr. Carol Rittner, professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Richard Stockton College, and your president Agnes Vertes representing Hungarian Holocaust survivors. After the presentations there were questions from the audience to the speakers. The whole event was filmed and can be viewed on the UN website.
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A recipient agency of the UJA Federation of Westport/Weston/Wilton/Norwalk.