



HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' FOUNDATION - USA

FAX COVER PAGE

June 24, 2015

Member Organizations (Partial List)

Amer. Assn. of Jewish Holocaust
Survivors of Greater Boston

Assn. of Holocaust Survivors from
Former USSR, Los Angeles

C.A.N.D.L.E.S., Terre Haute, IN
Child Survivors of Arizona

Child Survivors/Hidden Children of
The Holocaust

Coalition of Holocaust Survivor
Clubs in South Florida

Council of Nazi Holocaust Survivor
Organizations of So. California

Habonim Cultural Club, Miami

Holocaust Child Survivors &
Friends of Greater Hartford

Holocaust Survivors Club of
Boca Raton

Holocaust Survivors of
Greater Detroit

Holocaust Survivors of
Greater Pittsburgh

Holocaust Survivors of
South Florida

Holocaust Survivors Group of
Southern Nevada

Houston Council of
Jewish Holocaust Survivors

The Jewish Holocaust Survivors &
Friends of Greater Washington

Jewish Survivors of Latvia, Inc.
New York

National Assn. of Jewish Child
Holocaust Survivors, Inc.

New American Jewish Social Club,
Miami

New Cracow Friendship Society,
New York

Survivors of Atlantic City, NJ

Survivors of the Holocaust Asset
Recovery Project, Seattle

Survivors of the Holocaust of
New Mexico

Tikvah Acharay Hashoah,
San Francisco

To: Associated Press Rome Office

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**From: David Schaecter, President
Holocaust Survivors' Foundation USA**

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Please see the attached letter from the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA to His Holiness Pope Francis. We are a coalition of elected Holocaust survivor leaders from throughout the United States, and we believe you will find our plea to His Holiness to be extremely important, in fact urgent, on humanitarian and moral grounds. We believe the AP, with whom our organization has worked extensively in the U.S. and Europe (but not Italy), over the past decade or more is the perfect entity to carry this story. We would be happy to arrange for you to interview our members who signed this letter or others who can help shine a light on the terrible realities facing tens of thousands of survivors today.

Thank you,

**David Schaecter, President
Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA**

"JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR SURVIVORS"



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Tikvah Acharay Hashoah, San Francisco

His Holiness Pope Francis
c/o H.E. Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State
Apostolic Palace
Vatican City State, 00120
Email: Vatio26@relstat-segstat.va

Your Holiness,

My name is David Schaefer and I serve as the elected President of The Holocaust Survivors' Foundation USA ("HSF-USA"), a coalition of elected survivors and survivor groups from throughout the United States. We came together two decades ago because we were alarmed about the growing poverty and deprivation among our fellow survivors, and the shocking failure of established public and private institutions to require companies that profited from the Holocaust to be accountable to those of us who lost everything and continue to suffer immeasurably to this very day.

Today, tens of thousands of survivors worldwide are living in or near poverty, and are not receiving the health care and income support required to address their unique medical and mental health needs and intolerable living conditions. We are asking you, Your Holiness, to intervene directly to persuade today's Government of the Federal Republic Germany to fulfill provide the promised, owed and much needed compensation which was first promised by Chancellor Adenauer in the 1950's "to care for survivors until their last breath."

We have been following your Service to G-d with great interest beginning with your Service as Bishop and then Cardinal of Buenos Aires. I found your book, "Sobre El Cielo Y La Tierra" or "Regarding Heaven and Earth," authored with your friend and colleague Rabbi Abraham Skorka, quite moving, inspirational and forthright. Your Holiness, you stated that "The great powers just washed their hands-they knew much more that they said they did..."

On Sunday June 21, 2015, Your Holiness, once again, proclaimed that "The great powers had photographs of the railway that the trains took to Auschwitz to kill Jews, Christians, homosexuals, everybody..." and queried "Why didn't they bomb" those routes. When speaking about the Armenian genocide you further stated, "Where were the great powers then? They were looking away"

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Your Holiness, it is in the spirit of your compassion, honest, forthright and consistent remarks about the suffering of the Jewish people during the Shoah and others at the hands of the Nazi's (their Axis partners and industries such as insurance behemoths Allianz, Generali and others) that we write to you. Today, we believe that the German Government under Chancellor Merkel, may not "be looking away," but it is clear that the desperation and urgency of survivors' plight is not being properly met, despite promises, in a swift enough manner and at the levels required for survivors to live in dignity in their final years.

Today, half of our fellow Holocaust survivors throughout the world and in the United States exist below or near recognized levels of poverty. We are not "living" at or near poverty; we are "suffering" from poverty. The urgent needs of tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors today for home health care, proper therapies, mental health care assistance, medicines, eye care, dental care, hearing aids, and other mandated assistance, **are simply not being met** as our brothers and sisters are forced to tragically suffer, and sadly die, in poverty. Holocaust survivors suffer from unique medical and mental health needs, as identified by medical personnel, that resulted from or are exacerbated by our maltreatment under the Nazi German regime and its Axis partners and industries during the Holocaust, with the death camps, the labor camps, medical experiments, torture, starvation, death marches, and other crimes which have left their brutal legacy till this very hour, which you aptly call "genocide." Consequently, we believe today's German government bears unique responsibility for properly addressing the needs of all survivors in their final years.

Despite periodic increases in funding for home care, for example, the funding remains shamefully low. For example, the \$800 million pledged over 4 years announced some time ago is divided – as it should be -- among all 56,000 survivors receiving help worldwide. Such necessary division drastically dilutes the effective use of funds, and fails to meet the real, medically mandated necessary medical and mental health treatment standards for each of our fellow victims. Your Holiness, when you do the math, the recent announcement only provides a fraction of the much needed and required home care funding. In fact, it is **less than 30%** of the urgently needed home care funds. And, these funds do not include any other emergency and additional services that our fellow survivors require.

Your Holiness, what continues as we write to you, is a tragically inappropriate system of inadequate funding, which will never be able to properly assist all of our fellow survivors who thank G-d are still with us, though a large

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number are barely surviving. Tragically, the inescapable conclusion from the data is that in recent decades, tens of thousands of our fellow survivors have suffered and died without the help they needed and were promised. Without your intervention, Your Holiness, in the next decade, tens of thousands more survivors will continue to suffer and will sadly die in poverty and misery. This is a continuing humanitarian catastrophe and a true violation of human rights and dignity and we hope that through your and the Holy See's good offices, Your Holiness will intervene and encourage the German Government to end this suffering.

While any time remains left among our fellow survivors suffering in these appalling conditions, there is a consensus following major Congressional hearings in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate, that the time has long come for Germany to assume its full responsibility to provide for all medically necessary and basic income needs of all survivors, to the end of their lives. Even at this very late date and hour, we believe that with your personal intervention, today's German nation will honor Chancellor Adenauer's guarantee 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.

Your Holiness, rather than negotiate total sums every few years that give the appearance of being generous increases, they are in fact rationed to the point of leaving most survivors without necessary care that they desperately need, survivors require and deserve a comprehensive and permanent commitment for security and dignity. We would welcome your direct intervention to encourage Germany to commit and provide the total sums necessary to provide our fellow survivors with the desperately needed health care, home care, and income levels required. Ideally, these funds should be channeled through the U.S. government and provided directly to survivors and/or their service providers.

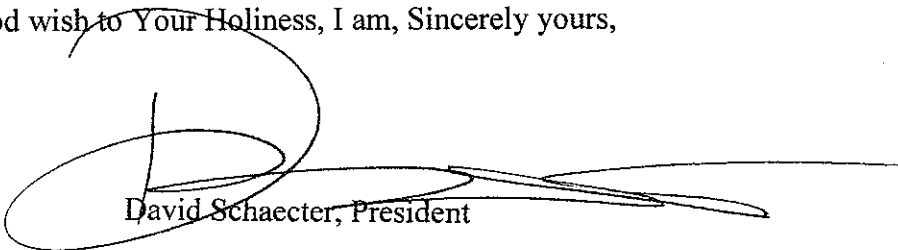
We believe that if the plight of our brothers and sisters were made known, with your personal intervention, the German people will support the greatly needed and necessary funding levels if they truly were made to understand how many survivors are still suffering under the current system.

"JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR SURVIVORS"



HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' FOUNDATION - USA

With every good wish to Your Holiness, I am, Sincerely yours,



David Schaecter, President

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JOINED BY HSF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- Israel Arbeiter, Boston MA
- Dena Axelrod, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Renee Firestone, Los Angeles, CA
- Sello Fisch, Bronx NY
- Ella Frumkin, Los Angeles, CA
- Nesse Godin, Washington D.C.
- Louise Lawrence-Israels, Washington D.C.
- Herbert Karliner, Miami Beach, FL
- David Mermelstein, Miami FL
- Alex Moskovic, Hobe Sound, FL
- Leo Rechter, Queens NY
- Jack Rubin, Boynton Beach, FL
- Anita Schuster, Las Vegas NV
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- Fred Taucher, Seattle WA
- Agnes Vertes, Weston, CT
- Esther Widman, Brooklyn NY

"JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR SURVIVORS"

The Washington Post

House panel approves bill to allow Holocaust survivors to sue for insurance benefits

By Associated Press, Published: March 7

WASHINGTON — In a plea for justice, a House panel pushed ahead legislation Wednesday that would allow thousands of aging Holocaust survivors in the United States to sue European insurance companies for benefits they estimate total \$20 billion.

The Foreign Affairs Committee approved a bill by voice vote that would give survivors access to U.S. courts and force companies such as Germany's Allianz SE and Italy's Assicurazioni Generali to disclose lists of policies held by Jews before World War II. Among the policies are life insurance, annuities and even dowries that Jewish families purchased for their daughters, envisioning that they would receive the money upon turning 18.

In many cases, insurance company records and government archives are the only proof of existence of the insurance policies.

"This bill is the last hope for Holocaust survivors to obtain justice," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., the committee chairman, whose district is home to many of the estimated 100,000 Holocaust survivors in the United States.

Among those attending the committee session was David Schaefer, 82, who survived the Auschwitz and Buchenwald death camps and is president of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA.

"In very plain and ordinary language, what happened today is we got back some of the dignity taken away from us," Schaefer of Miami said in a telephone interview. "Anyone can sue anyone. ... We're the only ones not allowed to sue."

The legislation has lingered in Congress for about five years and the House Judiciary Committee still must consider the bill. It faces opposition from the U.S. State Department and the German government. Germany points to the billions of dollars in reparations and payments it has made to survivors and other victims of the Nazi regime. The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims paid about \$305 million, and an additional \$200 million went to humanitarian programs for survivors.

The State Department told the committee this week that the legislation would force the reopening of long-settled Holocaust-era insurance cases that were resolved through diplomatic agreements, restitution programs through other countries or international commissions.

The bill would “open the floodgates to litigation, undermine commitments made by the United States, and weaken our ability to achieve such settlements in the future,” the State Department said.

The department said the bill would deal a setback to the cause of bringing justice to Holocaust survivors and other victims of the Nazi era rather than advancing the cause.

Survivors estimate that the policies were worth about \$600 million in 1938 and a calculation based on the savings bond yield, would put that amount at \$20 billion today.

Associated Press writer Curt Anderson in Miami contributed to this report.

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Opening of Nazi documents could aid compensation claims, survivors' group says

By Associated Press

Saturday, December 2, 2006 - Updated: 10:36 AM EST

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands - Public access to millions of Nazi war documents, kept in closed archives for 60 years, could help Holocaust survivors win larger claims for restitution, survivors groups say. Plans to open the Red Cross-administered archives at Bad Arolsen, Germany, should persuade committees handling compensation for survivors "to halt the rush to judgment" in settling claims, said the Holocaust Survivors' Foundation-USA, a national coalition of American survivors' organizations.

Some of the survivors also are appealing a federal court's dismissal of class action suits against the Italian insurance company Assicurazioni Generali for allegedly refusing to honor policies predating World War II.

"Survivors have been denied access to the necessary information required to mount full and effective disgorgement of the ill-gotten gains of the European plunderers," said an open letter by the coalition, which has more than two dozen groups representing about 20,000 Holocaust survivors.

The Nov. 21 letter, signed by the heads of 10 of the survivors' organizations, cited an Associated Press report on the monumental documentation kept at Bad Arolsen. The archive, with some 50 million pages, is run by the International Tracing Service, an arm of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The report "underscores what the survivors have been saying for years," Sam Dubbin, a lawyer representing the groups, said Friday. Claims must be resolved with "a full and thorough public accounting of what the companies stole, how they stole it and the amounts that were stolen," he said.

The archive comprises 16 linear miles of transportation lists, concentration camp registrations, death books and displaced persons files. The papers were collected after the war to trace missing people and later to verify claims for compensation upon request.

Until now, ITS has not allowed independent researchers to examine the files or information to be publicly accessible, citing privacy reasons. Last May, the 11-nation committee overseeing the archive decided to open them for wider access. But ratification of the revised agreement is still pending, and until then digital copies from the archive cannot be made and distributed to key institutions.

"I don't know what's in those files in Bad Arolsen, but the process by which Jews were rounded up and deported and the process by which their assets were seized was one and the same process," said Dubbin, who is based in Miami, Fla.

Fred Taucher, 74, head of the Survivors of the Holocaust Asset Recovery Project in Seattle, said it was urgent that more compensation reach needy survivors.

"I have personally met people in New York and Miami going from garbage can to garbage can out on the street to see if they can find food to eat - and with their numbers tattooed on their arm still. It breaks my heart," he said in a telephone interview.

Date: 01/27/2014 12:37 PM

BC-EU--Poland-Auschwitz

Auschwitz survivors mark liberation anniversary
CZAREK SOKOLOWSKI
Associated Press

OSWIECIM, Poland (AP) - A European Jewish leader condemned anti-Semitism as a crime on Monday as Auschwitz survivors and Israeli officials marked 69 years since the liberation of the Nazi death camp.

The ceremony at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial took place on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, established by the United Nations in memory of some 6 million Holocaust victims, and some 1.5 million victims of Auschwitz, who were mostly Jews.

Some 20 survivors walked through the gate that bares the infamous "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Makes You Free) sign and laid a wreath at the former camp's Executions Wall, where the inmates, mainly Polish resistance members, were shot to death.

Around 60 members of the Knesset, or half of the Israeli legislature, joined the survivors for the observances that included visits to the red brick Auschwitz barracks which house a collection of the victims' belongings and hair, and a list of the names of some 4.2 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

In a special ceremony in Birkenau, also called Auschwitz II, they also heard from one of the survivors, Noah Klieger, about the Death March when some 15,000 died after Nazis fleeing the advancing Soviet army in January 1945 forced inmates still able to walk to march west in freezing weather. They remembered Jan. 27, 1945, when the Red Army entered the camp and freed the remaining inmates, mostly children and sick people.

Israeli coalition leader, Yariv Levin, speaking on behalf of Knesset lawmakers, said that people in Israel should rely on themselves and aim to build a safe world.

"Walking here, on this soil soaked with blood of our brothers and sisters, we must assure our children and future generations that a different world, full of hope and free of fear can be built."

Speaking at the European parliament ceremony in Brussels, European Jewish Congress President, Moshe Kantor, rejected free speech arguments over what he called the worldwide spread of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is "not an opinion - it's a crime," he said.

Kantor pointed to the "quenelle," a gesture invented by the French comedian Dieudonne that some have called an inverted Nazi salute. The comic, who has been convicted more than half a dozen times for inciting racial hatred or anti-Semitism, says it is merely an anti-establishment symbol. The gesture made headlines when soccer star Nicolas Anelka used it to celebrate a goal.

"Today we are witnessing the absolute democratization of anti-Semitism," Kantor said. It is "a symbol invented by a so-called comedian that allows young people out for a drink, soldiers having a laugh and even a footballer scoring a goal, to have their own unique opportunity for Jew hatred."

In Italy, meanwhile, President Giorgio Napolitano condemned as a "miserable provocation" threats against Rome's Jewish community in recent days, including the delivery of packages containing pig heads to Rome's main synagogue.

Napolitano said Monday during Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations that recent insults made against the Jewish community are "comparable only to the repugnant material in those packages."

Italian police also detained two men, ages 33 and 47, on suspicion of instigating racial hatred for anti-Semitic graffiti, including denial of the Holocaust, near the main judicial offices in Rome. Authorities say the men belong to different far-right groups. No arrests have been announced for the delivery of the pig head's.

Also Monday, the Holocaust Survivors' Foundation USA called on Germany's Allianz to pay aging survivors benefits that their families bought before they died in the Holocaust.

"It is shameful that today, Holocaust survivors are not allowed to even bring a lawsuit in a U.S. court to recover these unpaid policies," they said. Legislation that would allow survivors in the U.S. to sue European insurance companies has lingered in Congress for years.