



# **World Federation News Update!**

A periodic email update from the  
**World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and  
Descendants,  
JUNE 26, 2014**

*From the Executive Committee of the WFJCSHD:*

*President - Stefanie Seltzer (USA);*

*Executive Vice President - Steve Adler(USA);*

*Vice Presidents— Chana Arnon (Israel), Anita Ekstein (Canada), Jacques Fein(USA),  
Melissa Hacker (KTA, New York), Max Arpels Lezer (Netherland),*

*René Lichtman (USA), Daisy Miller (USA); Henri Obstfeld (UK), Melita Svob (Croatia);*

*Secretary—Charles Silow (USA,2G), Treasurer— Isaac Kot (USA,2G)*

**email: [holocaustchild@comcast.net](mailto:holocaustchild@comcast.net)**

**website: [www.holocaustchild.org](http://www.holocaustchild.org)**

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June 26, 2014,

## **Dear Friends,**

Our conference plans are going well. Our Berlin team, Max, Philipp, Bella, is working very hard keeping up with the registrations and working with our other coordinators on programming, workshops, speakers, panels, entertainment, security, and all other important details.

Below you will see many **new travel options, for Jewish Berlin, pre and post conference**, as usual, and other trips, in Berlin and the rest of the country. We'll have Berlin trips on Wednesday afternoon, August 27, right after our conference closing and checkout, both 2 hours and 4 hours trips, and on Thursday morning August 28. And these trips can be repeated on Saturday and Sunday, August 23 and 24th, **if people sign up in advance**.

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## **SOME REMINDERS**

**MEDICAL BRACELET "ROADID" RECOMMENDED.** For those of us with medical conditions, this is one simple way to put all your medical details, medications, history of illnesses, surgeries, next of kin, etc., in ONE easy location.

Click on: <https://www.roadid.com/Checkout/Cart.aspx>

**MEDICAL INSURANCE NEEDED.** Please make sure you have adequate insurance.

**MEDICATIONS** Bring all your medications, and store them in safe place so they do not get lost while travelling.

**PASSPORT** Your passport **MUST** be valid for 6 months after the expiration date. See your post office with questions.

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### **VISIT YOUR CHILDHOOD SCHOOL IN GERMANY?**

Please consider the idea seriously. Some of our German-born attendees are doing that, are invited and welcomed to "their old school". The students are very interested in what life was like before the war, in this school, in the community. There are questions and discussions

Please let us know if you are interested, contact: **holocaustchild@comcast.net**

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A brief review of important dates, events, etc:

### **DATES:**

**Friday, Saturday, Aug.22, 23,** Executive Committee Meetings

**Sunday August 24** , 9 AM - 5 PM, **Governing Board** meeting. So all GB members should arrive at the hotel at the latest on Saturday the 23rd August.

**Sunday, August 24, 6 PM,** welcome dinner.

**Wednesday August 27th,** conference officially closes around noon. Checkout.

**Wednesday August 27, 3 PM to 6 PM,** our **Governing Board** members only, no family, will be invited by the Claims Conference to attend a meeting with German Bundestag members and other politicians.

**You must make a reservation, security purposes, for this meeting by contacting our Berlin staff with you address, etc.** GB member with reservation will receive a personal invitation from the Claims Conference. You **must** have this invitation to attend this meeting.

**Thursday August 28** , everyone on their own; many trips are planned by our travel agents, Milk and Honey Travel, in English, Wladis Travel, in Russian.

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### **WFJCSH&D, Claims Conference, German Officials Meeting**

For some time , there has been a "working committee", comprised of members and staff of the Claims Conference, and several individuals assigned by the German government to work with the Claims conference, on the issue of **substantiating a claim on behalf of Child Survivors.**

**The door has been opened for the recognition of the trauma and damage suffered by Child Survivors. However, contrary to recent incorrect media reports, there is as yet NO program of compensation for Child Survivors.**

Aware of the importance of the issue, the WF proposed to the Claims Conference to have this meeting take place right after our conference ends, **Wednesday August 27, between 3 PM, 1500hrs, and 7 PM, 1900 hrs.**

As you may gather from the above, many details are still to be worked out.

**We emphasize again that there is as yet NO compensation program set up for Child Survivor issues. Attendance at this meeting by written invitation only.**

## Our Liaison in Berlin

Our World Federation VP Max Arpels Lezer has been hard at work as liaison, working with **Philip Sonntag** from **Child Survivors Germany** and with our excellent one person staff, **Bella Zchwiraschwili**. They have met with a number of governmental officials and organizations, in order to give us the best welcome possible. We should add that Max Arpels Lezer is also President of the **European Association of Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust**. We are expecting a number of attendees from Eastern Europe states.

You can reach the EUAS at Tel.++ 31 (0) 6 212 96 881; [www.eu-as.org](http://www.eu-as.org)

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## HILTON BERLIN HOTEL

We strongly encourage you to use the link below:

**[Make reservations by using the Hilton Hotel reservation link,CLICK HERE](http://goo.gl/dFT6BZ)**  
**<http://goo.gl/dFT6BZ>**

You may have to click twice for best result. If it does not work, there may be an internet flaw or computer error. Just try again at a later moment. Meanwhile over 100 rooms have been reserved, so the link does work.

If you book a room through the 800 number, then you are NOT using the official conference Hilton link, above. You do not get the conference room rate of € 126 ( including breakfast ), but the regular room rate, plus you pay taxes and pay for your breakfast. Plus, the Hilton's Manager, our friend Bettina will not find your reservation among the reservations for the conference, which means that a 800 reservation does NOT count towards our complimentary rooms, rooms saved for those who need help. Our advice and the hotel advice is please stick to the hotel link.

**Payment at the time of check out should be made by a credit card.**

**Hotel Reservation and Payment information MUST be received by July 31, 2014.**

Register online at: [http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/B/BERHITW-GWORA-20140822/index.jhtml?WT.mc\\_id=POG](http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/B/BERHITW-GWORA-20140822/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG)

### Optional mail-in Hotel Registration Form

If you need to register by mail, remember to fill in **both** sides of the form and mail to:

**Berlin Conference 2014**

**Bella Zchwiraschwili, Lewishamstr. 14, 10629 Berlin - GERMANY**

or send forms by email to Bella: [bella.wfbc@gmail.com](mailto:bella.wfbc@gmail.com)

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**[FROM "MILK & HONEY TRAVEL" JEWISH BERLIN SHORT TRIPS](#)**

## PRE-CONFERENCE AND POST-CONFERENCE:

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, SUNDAY AUGUST 24, 2 AND 4 HOUR TRIPS**

**WEDNESDAY, AUG 27, THURSDAY AUG 28, 2 AND 4 HOUR TRIPS.**

If we do not have enough reservations for both days, we may have to combine into one day, the more popular one. For example, if we only have 3 reservations for Sunday, and 4 for Saturday, we would combine both into Saturday, and ask you to make the Sat trip. We need to fill the bus.

**CALL M&H NOW TO RESERVE A SEAT... See below for phone, email address, website.**

**.see their phone numbers at bottom, dial 011 from USA.**

## *Dear Friends, welcome to Berlin,*

We are a Jewish owned and operated tour company that specializes in premier city tours in more than fifty European locations.

Berlin is one of the most exciting cities in Europe. As well as recognizing past centuries of Jewish life, Berlin is a city where the losses of the Holocaust are keenly felt and stringently remembered. We understand the mixed feelings that many people have about coming to Germany and we are prepared to do more than just "show you the sites;" we will also address the difficult issues that may arise on such a journey. Our guides have all specialized in Jewish history and are very well-acquainted with the city, its history and also with the Jewish community of today.

Please find bellow information about 2-hour and 4-hour tours of the city center.

### 2 Hour Driving Tour of Jewish and General Berlin:

We will start the tour with a drive by Berlin's highlights and important Jewish sites. At the **Old Jewish Quarter** of Berlin will see (from outside) the **New Synagogue**, now a museum of Berlin Jewish life. We then travel down the Grand boulevard, **Unter den Linden**, along which your guide will point out the many famous sites such as **Museum Island, Berlin Cathedral, Humboldt University, the State Opera, and the Old Armoury**. We will stop along the way at **Bebelplatz**--the site of the infamous Book Burning in 1933. We continue on to one of the enduring symbols of Berlin the **Brandenburg Gate**, located a **Paris Square**. Nearby we find the **Holocaust Memorial**, where your guide can help explain the many meanings behind the field of massive stone blocks.

COST: **40 Euro per person**, minimum 11 people in the group.

This tour is available on:

Pre-Conference: Saturday, August 23, Sunday Aug 24, time to be determined.

Post-Conference: Wednesday afternoon, August 27, after conference closing and checkout

Note: anyone attending the Governing Board meeting CANNOT attend the Wednesday trip, since these people must board a 2 PM (1400hrs) bus to go to their meeting. These people will be able to attend the Thursday trip.

Thursday Morning August 28. Especially good for those people who attended the Governing Board meeting the previous day.

### 4 Hour Driving Tour of Jewish and General Berlin:

We will start the tour with a drive by Berlin's highlights and important Jewish sites. At the **Old Jewish Quarter** of Berlin will see (from outside) the **New Synagogue**, now a museum of Berlin Jewish life. We then travel down the Grand boulevard, **Unter den Linden**, along which your guide will point out the many famous sites such as

**Museum Island, Berlin Cathedral, Humboldt University, the State Opera, and the Old Armoury.** We will stop along the way at **Bebelplatz**--the site of the infamous Book Burning in 1933. We continue on to one of the enduring symbols of Berlin the **Brandenburg Gate**, located a **Paris Square**. Nearby we find the **Holocaust Memorial**, where your guide can help explain the many meanings behind the field of massive stone blocks.

We will drive by the awe-inspiring modern architectural complexes at **Potsdamer Platz** and continue on to see the **Berlin Wall**. Here, if time allows, we can also visit the recently renovated '**Topography of Terror**', situated on the former site of the headquarters of the SS and Gestapo.

We end the day with a guided tour of the **Jewish Museum**. Here your guide will explain the motivation behind Daniel Libeskind's magnificent deconstructionist design, which houses the museum's permanent exhibition "Two Millennia of German-Jewish History".

**COST: 55 Euro per person**, including entrance to the Jewish Museum, minimum 11 people in the group.

This tour is available on:

Pre-Conference: Saturday, August 23, Sunday Aug 24, time to be determined.

Post-Conference: Wednesday afternoon, August 27, after conference closing and checkout

Note: anyone attending the Governing Board meeting CANNOT attend the Wednesday trip, since these people must board a 2 PM (1400hrs) bus to go to their meeting. These people will be able to attend the Thursday trip.

Thursday Morning August 28. Especially good for those people who attended the Governing Board meeting the previous day.

**In case of unforeseeable circumstances the itinerary or touring time may be altered.**

**Please register in advance to guarantee your seat.**

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In addition, we would be happy to offer tours to those of you who want to book additional tours individually. We recommend to book the individual tours long in advance, to guarantee an available guide.

### **3 Hour Walking Tour of the Old Jewish Quarter**

On this tour we will explore the **Old Jewish Quarter** of Berlin. Here we find the site of **Berlin's first synagogue** and the **Memorial for the Women's Protest in Rosen St.** We will also visit the site of the old Jewish cemetery where **Moses Mendelssohn's** is buried and see the **Jewish High School**. We will also visit the **New Synagogue**, now a museum of Berlin Jewish life. The New Synagogue complex also includes archives, a community center and a chapel where services are held.

COST: 190 Euro, total for up to 6 people, entrance and transportation fees are not included.

### **4 Hour Driving Tour of the West Berlin**

We begin this with a drive through the new government area, which encompasses the **Reichstag** and the **New Chancellery**. We will travel along the **Street of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June** through **Tiergarten**, Berlin's beautiful city park, at the centre of which we find the **Victory Column**. Next we drive by the **Old Congress Centre** and **Bellevue Palace**.

In city-centre west we can see the famous department store **KaDeWe** (the "Harrods of Berlin") as well as the **Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church**, reconstructed after the church was badly bombed during WWII. We can also see Berlin's **Jewish Community Centre**. We will be sure as well to visit the '**Places of Remembrance**' memorial in the Bavarian Quarter.

The last stop is the memorial site '**Platform 17**' in the train station Grunewald, where the actual deportations from Berlin took place.

COST: 360 Euro, total for up to 6 people.

#### **4 Hour Driving Tour - Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial Site**

Many people travelling to Berlin wish to also visit the site of the former Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. Being so close to the capital, Sachsenhausen was an extremely important camp under the Nazis. It was built in 1936, as an example of a 'modern and contemporary camp' (Himmler). Top SS architects were hired to design the ideal camp upon which all other camps were to be modeled. Throughout your tour, you will hear not only of the history of Sachsenhausen itself, but also the various phases of the concentration camp system as a whole and how they mirror the Nazi's political fortunes and goals throughout the war.

Sachsenhausen was used as a training site for huge numbers of SS officers, who would then be sent on to other camps. The site's significance was further reinforced when the Concentration Camp Inspection Office, the administrative headquarters for the entire system, was moved from Berlin to Oranienburg in 1938.

Originally the camp housed political prisoners, most of whom were not Jewish. It was not until the mass arrests on Kristallnacht, or The Night of Broken Glass (November 9-10 1938) that thousands of Jewish prisoners were incarcerated here as well. Sachsenhausen was not an official extermination camp itself, and many prisoners would have been transported on to Auschwitz. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of people died here because of forced labor, starvation, disease and executions.

Today, state of the art multi-media exhibitions are located throughout the camp in the original, or painstakingly reconstructed, buildings. Exhibitions include film and audio clips as well as artifacts donated by ex-prisoners.

COST: 360 Euro, total for up to 6 people.

#### **4-Hr Driving Tour - East Berlin and the Cold War**

Today we will head eastwards, for a tour that takes you off the beaten track and into the story of former East Berlin.

From **Alexanderplatz**, the main square of former East Berlin, we will drive to **Karl-Marx Boulevard** - the show piece of former East Germany, and to **East Side Gallery**, a 1.3 km-long painted stretch of the Berlin Wall and the largest open-air gallery in the world. Driving through **Friedrichshain** you can have a glimpse into the new East Berlin. We will see the towering **Soviet War Memorial** in **Treptower Park**, and in the deserted **Tempelhof Airport**, now transformed into a lively park you will see the **Airlift Memorial**.

If time allows we will also visit the **Berlin Wall Memorial** in Bernauer Strasse, which contains the last piece of Berlin Wall with the preserved grounds behind it.

COST: 360 Euro, total for up to 6 people.

#### **7 hour driving tour - Day tour to Potsdam:**

Often referred to as a truly European city, Potsdam is both the "Versailles" of the German royal family and home of the famous post-war Potsdam Conference. It is approximately 15 miles west of Berlin's center, located on the beautiful Havel River. Most famous of the palaces and gardens (a World Unesco Heritage Site) is Sanssouci -- "without worries"--built as Friedrich the Great's summer pleasure palace. Let us help you forget all your worries and enjoy this capital of the state Brandenburg, full of European charm!

En route to Potsdam, you will drive through the beautiful Grunewald district of Berlin. Along with spectacular villas, you will see a haunting Holocaust memorial site called '**Platform 17**' where the actual deportations from Berlin took place. As you pass through Wannsee, you will see the site of the infamous '**Wannsee Conference Vila**' where the Nazis planned the Holocaust (guiding inside the museum is not allowed).

You will then cross over the world-famous **Glienicker Bridge**, which divided West Berlin from East Germany and where spies were swapped at the crack of dawn (and you thought that only happened in the movies!

Entering the historical Potsdam through its old city gates, we will visit the traditional market place and various quarters: **The Russian Colony, Alexandrowka**, named for the Tsar, a friend of Frederick Wilhelm III; the popular early 18th century **Dutch Quarter** -- now a haven for artisans; the **Second Baroque Extension** where the pattern of a Prussian Baroque city becomes clear. We will not forget to point out the marvellous **Sanssouci castle** and the **New Palace** (visit inside one of the palaces is possible with audio guides). Your guide will also tell you of the small Potsdam Jewish community historically and today.

COST: 630 Euro, total for up to 6 people, entrance fees are not included.

Your Milk & Honey Tours guide will meet you at your hotel or a central location and end the tour at a location of your choice. If a meal or coffee break is required, she or he will select a lovely local restaurant.

At Milk & Honey Tours, we facilitate unique encounters with people, perspectives and places of your particular interest. Your guide is involved with the Jewish community and knows how to handle the questions and concerns you might have in a sensitive way. We hope to greet you in Berlin soon!

Best wishes,

*Noa (Naama) Tovia*

**Milk & Honey Tours GmbH**

Markelstraße 42

D -12163 Berlin

Tel: +49-30-61 62 57 61

Fax: +49-30-61 62 57 62

[info@milkhoneytours.com](mailto:info@milkhoneytours.com)

[www.milkhoneytours.com](http://www.milkhoneytours.com)

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**OUR OTHER TRAVEL AGENCY** (might be best for Russian-speaking attendees)

Wladis Travel Agency, (Wladis Reisebüro) in Berlin

Owner Wladimir Malinski

Phone: [+ 49 30 3641 2883](tel:+493036412883)

[www.wladis-resien.de](http://www.wladis-resien.de)

[info@wladis-reisen.de](mailto:info@wladis-reisen.de)

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## **Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Liquidation of the**

## **Lodz Ghetto: August 28, 2014**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am sending the invitation to the 70th Commemoration of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto.

We will be grateful for sharing Jewish community in your country information about Commemoration of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto.

Yours sincerely,  
Katarzyna Lewińska  
Centrum Dialogu imienia Marka Edelmana  
ul. Wojska Polskiego 83  
91-755 Łódź  
NIP 7262636381  
RIK 1/2010

70th commemoration of the liquidation, of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto/obchody 70. Rocznicy likwidacji Litzmannstadt Getto. Friday August 29, 2014

**From:** [getto@centrumdialogu.com](mailto:getto@centrumdialogu.com)

**Subject:** 70th commemoration of the liquidation, of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto/obchody 70. Rocznicy likwidacji Litzmannstadt Getto

In a few weeks we will observe the anniversary of the final liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto. We remember:

A. Lodz before the Shoah <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwGOuCtpxTM>

B. Lodz Ghetto [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuC\\_DOU8ULE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuC_DOU8ULE)

Rough draft proposed agenda:

1. Gathering together. Films showing as people assemble. Music background
2. Room is darkened and line of children enters carrying the memorial candle (ner zikaron) singing ani maamim.
3. singing of the national anthem of the United States of America followed by greetings
4. Panel of 5 scholars and moderator deliver 5 minute presentations on 5 ghetto related topics. Eg: Give me your children speech, Rumkowski, industry and culture, ghetto liquidation.
5. silence
6. Singing of partisan song and Hatikva
7. Adjourn. Refreshments and conversation.

**Central Chicago Venue to be confirmed**

Hold the date should be sent out to mailing lists as soon as possible

<http://lodz70th.eventbrite.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LodzGhetto>

C. The Partisan Song

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=E4FDdzEo-OY&autoplay=1>

The JUF, the Consulate General of the State of Israel, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland, the Consulate General of Lithuania, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Haifa University, Father John Pawlikowski, the Illinois Holocaust Museum, Polish Museum of America, Fundusz Michaela H

Traisona dla Polski, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Polvision, the Polish American Congress, Piast Institute, the Union League Club, Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone, YIVO, Galicja Jewish Museum Krakow, the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, Association of descendants of the shoah of Illinois, Shaarit Hapleytah of Metropolitan Chicago, and the DePaul University College of Law Center for Jewish Law & Judaic Studies are confirmed supporters of the proposed program. The United States Holocaust Museum (to be confirmed).

For further information: Michael H. Traison, Commemoration Chairman  
+13128604230 [traison@millercanfield.com](mailto:traison@millercanfield.com)<<mailto:traison@millercanfield.com>>

Cantorial Music provided by Hazan Alberto Mizrahi of Anshe Emet Congregation

Remarks by the Consul General of the State of Israel, Roey Gilad

There will be books and diaries available for purchase, displays of photos and film.

Polvision will broadcast a program on the Ghetto Liquidation in the weeks preceding the anniversary

Light kosher refreshments will be available

There is no charge for this event

Hold the date should be sent out to mailing lists as soon as possible

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## **German Government Honors Roman Kent**

**May 30, 2014 /** 1 Sivan 5774



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

# Message from the Chairman

Dear Stefanie,

In a true example of events coming full circle, Roman Kent has been given a prestigious honor by the country that once sought to destroy him. Last week, Roman was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his outstanding work on behalf of German-Jewish-American relations. Busso von Alvensleben, Germany's Consul General in New York, presented the award, the highest civilian tribute Germany can pay to individuals for service to the nation, on behalf of President Joachim Gauck.

Roman, a survivor of the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz, and several other camps, received the award at a reception in the Consul General's New York residence. I could not help but be struck at the incredible journey from Auschwitz inmate to German government honoree. Roman is an amazing example of someone who has taken the most horrific events that one could contemplate and rather than fester with bitterness uses his experience as a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations. His story is one of resilience, hope and reconciliation – while never forgetting his painful past and honoring the memory of what he and so many of us lost.

Roman is a longtime member of the Claims Conference negotiating delegation, president of the International Auschwitz Committee and in 2011 was named by President Obama to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the body which oversees the museum in Washington, D.C. He is the Chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and president of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, a demonstration of his commitment to rescuers as well as survivors.

“Firstly, I would like to thank each of you for being here with me tonight to witness that life is indeed filled with



**German Consul General Busso von Alvensleben reading the proclamation from President Joachim Gauck bestowing the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit on Roman Kent, and pinning it to his jacket, below.**



**"Life is indeed full of unimaginable surprises," Roman said about receiving the award, Germany's**

unimaginable surprises. For how could I, a Holocaust survivor, even remotely envision such an incredible scenario when enslaved in Auschwitz that I would be standing here today receiving from the German government the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit award," Roman said at the ceremony. "By having the courage to face the past, by having the decency to assume responsibilities to the victims of the past, Germany is creating a foundation for an impressive future. It is therefore that this survivor is extremely honored to receive the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany award."

"Mr. Kent, you never forgot what you and your family endured and this ultimately led you to engage in a moral necessity that not many have been able to accept. With the energy inside of you and sheer determination, you willingly accepted this calling and began your fight for the interests of Holocaust survivors and in reminding the world of the lessons the Holocaust has taught. Not once did you grow tired of your calling. Not once did you want to give up. Not once did you show bitterness or hatred," said Consul General Busso von Alvensleben. "Germany has endeavoured to heed the message that Roman Kent has always embodied: the message never to forget the horrors of the Holocaust, to fight indifference in the face of any kind of discrimination, and to resist and counter any abuse of human rights. We Germans are grateful to Roman Kent for the gift of his trust, a gift by all means not to be taken for granted from someone who has suffered so much from German hands."

I know just how moved Roman was to receive this honor and I know you all join me in congratulating him and his dear wife Hannah, and thanking him for his tireless quest on behalf of his fellow victims of the Shoah, perpetuating the memory of those lost and honoring the Righteous Gentiles. May Roman continue to have the strength to carry on his important mission and work with the Claims

**highest civilian honor.**



**Roman's wife Hannah and their family attended the event, held at the residence of the Consul General.**

Conference.

Shabbat shalom,

Julius Berman

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**From:** Julius Berman <[julius.berman@claimscon.org](mailto:julius.berman@claimscon.org)>  
**Subject:** "Ghetto Pensions" Made Retroactive to 1997  
**Date:** June 6, 2014  
**To:** Stefanie <[stefaseltzer@gmail.com](mailto:stefaseltzer@gmail.com)>

**June 6, 2014 / 8 Sivan 5774**



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

## Message from the Chairman

Dear Stefanie,

I am pleased to inform you that yesterday, the German Parliament (Bundestag) voted to grant payments retroactive to 1997 to current and future recipients of Social Security for work in ghettos, known by the German acronym of ZRBG or more colloquially as “ghetto pensions.” These payments will bring a long-delayed measure of justice to elderly survivors who have been waiting for decades for Germany to acknowledge their labor, and who greatly value these payments.

The Bundestag voted to amend the existing ZRBG legislation after years of Claims Conference negotiations about the program. Last fall, we worked to ensure that a solution to attain retroactive payments would be part of the new government’s coalition agreement then being

formed. We reached out to Andrea Nahles, incoming Federal Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. “The average age of the people in question is 85 years. It is not necessary to stress the immediate urgency of the necessary legal regulation,” we wrote to Minister Nahles, urging her to take measures so that back payments to 1997 could be approved.

This past February, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced while visiting Israel that her government would seek a way to attain the retroactive payments as soon as possible. There was a strong push from the government of Israel on this issue. Minister Nahles then introduced the amendment to the Bundestag in April.

Currently about 40,000 Holocaust survivors of Nazi-era ghettos receive these payments. Until the passage of this amendment, most recipients have only been able to receive payments dating back four years prior to the approval of their claims.

The Claims Conference has pressed the issue of implementing these so-called “Ghetto pensions” for years in negotiations with the German government and has been in the forefront of efforts to improve the program. Although these payments, based on the law of 2002 (ZRBG), came into effect as of 1997, overly strict interpretation of the criteria by local German authorities led to the denial of 61,000 out of 70,000 claims. The Claims Conference also negotiated the separate Ghetto Fund, which provided a one-time payment of €2,000. Originally, payments under this fund were to be deducted from the pension but the Claims Conference negotiated that (i) the €2,000 payment would not be deducted and (ii) there is no filing deadline for the Ghetto Fund.

When review of the denied pension claims was ordered by the German Federal Court for Social Security Matters in 2009, the Claims Conference pressed for expedited review so people could begin to receive payments as soon as possible. The Court incorporated many Claims Conference contentions in its opinion, deciding that the interpretation of “remuneration” should be broad and encompass, for example, food or any other benefits that workers might have received for their labor. The Court further ruled that such remuneration could also have been paid to the ghetto *Judenrat* instead of directly to the worker. The Court ruling also confirmed that the law did not include any age limit for applicants.

However, even after this ruling, survivors could only receive payments dating back four years, at most to 2005, according to the limits of the general German Social Security regulations. In 2012, the highest social court in Germany upheld the four-year limit.

The new law will allow for:

- All Holocaust survivors who currently receive a Ghetto pension will now have the option of the pension re-assessed with a new “start date” of July 1, 1997, regardless of when the original application was first made. This will likely result in an additional lump-sum payment to any survivor whose current pension start date is later than July 1997.
- Any survivor who now applies for a Ghetto pension for the first time will, if successful, have a “start date” back to July 1997.
- These pension reassessments will apply not only to Ghetto pensions for survivors still living but also to widow(er) pensions. Non-spouse heirs of those who collected Ghetto pensions during their lifetimes should also benefit from these pension reassessments, but likely only after the cases of living survivors and surviving spouses are handled and succession established.

The complication of this revision to the program is that depending on the recipient’s age, a pension backdated to 1997 might result in lower monthly amounts, the difference of which must be deducted from the lump-sum. Therefore, it may be advantageous for some people to decline the earlier start date. Each survivor will be given the option.

With this Bundestag vote granting back payments to 1997, entitled persons can now opt either for (i) a back payment retroactive to 1997, combined with potentially smaller future monthly payments (current pensions have a supplement for each year in which no pension was drawn from age 65 upwards), or (ii) the continued payment of the present higher monthly amount, but without back payment. Letters from the German Social Security authorities will be sent to each of the 40,000 people affected by this change. The Claims Conference has also worked with the government to ensure that letters will be sent in local residence language, as opposed to the previous system in which letters were sent only in German. This is especially important as (i) many recipients do not speak German, (ii) the options are complicated and there are financial consequences, and (iii) often family or others will help the survivors with the required paperwork. Letters should be sent starting in July.

Although this is not a program administered by the Claims Conference, the fair implementation of this program has been a priority in our discussions with the German government for a number of years. We are gratified that our efforts have resulted in this change that will help the remaining recipients receive payments in keeping with the original intent of the legislation.

Read news coverage of this development:

[Associated Press](#)

[Ha'aretz](#)

Shabbat shalom,

Julius Berman

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**From:** Arieh Lebowitz <[ariehnyc@PRODIGY.NET](mailto:ariehnyc@PRODIGY.NET)>

**Subject:** "Missing Identity Website" - persons who were children separated from their families when they were too young to know.

**Date:** May 2, 2014 at 4:55:24 PM EDT

**To:** [AHOINFO@LISTSERV.USHMM.ORG](mailto:AHOINFO@LISTSERV.USHMM.ORG)

**Reply-To:** Arieh Lebowitz <[ariehnyc@prodigy.net](mailto:ariehnyc@prodigy.net)>

**Moshe Chertoff** <<https://www.facebook.com/chertoff>> shared a link

<[http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.missing-identity.net%2F&h=mAQHYolu-AQG3D61L4wGJUz4eWa-DRTk9IpuASi4hc8j86Q&enc=AZPTZESas60t0CGs8YsLb0yjSp5VGIR8StG9t3UsdyfVdZFmHdQKJ-M0AJsQgH\\_B3XeNQhPIHi91dBszHUZspLf&s=1](http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.missing-identity.net%2F&h=mAQHYolu-AQG3D61L4wGJUz4eWa-DRTk9IpuASi4hc8j86Q&enc=AZPTZESas60t0CGs8YsLb0yjSp5VGIR8StG9t3UsdyfVdZFmHdQKJ-M0AJsQgH_B3XeNQhPIHi91dBszHUZspLf&s=1)> via Anika Kanter

<<https://www.facebook.com/earthmandala>> . April 27

<[https://www.facebook.com/chertoff/posts/10152343940888279?stream\\_ref=10](https://www.facebook.com/chertoff/posts/10152343940888279?stream_ref=10)>

I personally request that you try to help remaining survivors or their families find their identity that was taken from them in the Holocaust. These are persons who were children that were separated from their families when they were too young to know. You don't have to be from Europe or be Jewish. You might know someone from a town mentioned or with a similar family name. Please try to help.

Thanks in advance,

Moshe Chertoff

Co-founder of the Missing Identity Website

<[http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.missing-identity.net%2F&h=3AQE9zxuNAQHra51Q7hbbh-9xhpYzOnXtpbv5f9cTtKXOFw&enc=AZORVNIXKXr25DVb97b8p\\_95gYsDOVBsJ42qyxfHmpIpIL0IJdaHyzp\\_OvpvW794tJnV1HG\\_KbkcmOzPzBrCgR0W&s=1](http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.missing-identity.net%2F&h=3AQE9zxuNAQHra51Q7hbbh-9xhpYzOnXtpbv5f9cTtKXOFw&enc=AZORVNIXKXr25DVb97b8p_95gYsDOVBsJ42qyxfHmpIpIL0IJdaHyzp_OvpvW794tJnV1HG_KbkcmOzPzBrCgR0W&s=1)>

Home

[www.missing-identity.net](http://www.missing-identity.net)

<<http://www.missing-identity.net/>>

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