



CHILD SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST, LOS ANGELES

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Dear friends,

It is my hope to see you often in the remaining months of 2009. I wish you and your families the best of good health and good times in the New Year as you celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

The success of our last Regional meeting in March has inspired us to plan two more such intimate gatherings. The first one will take place on Sunday, September 13, 2009 at the home of Vera Hirtz in Brentwood. We have invited our dear friend and fellow child survivor Erika Kahn (who now lives in Santa Barbara) to share a unique experience in which she has recently participated. The Jewish Federation of Santa Barbara has just concluded a 6-week pilot program linking "At risk youth" with Holocaust survivors of Santa Barbara. The program was very successful and brought a lot of interest from the community. Erika will bring with her Ross Peyson, the outreach coordinator for JFSB, to discuss this amazing program with us. Look for details in the calendar and reserve early for this inspiring meeting.

The second Regional meeting will take place on December 6, 2009 at the home of Natalie Gold. We are fortunate to have, as our guest author, Suzanne Lobel from New York. Suzanne will discuss her very successful book, "At the Mercy of Strangers" — a memoir of growing up as a child in Belgium. (Not to be confused with Suzanne Vromen who spoke to us at the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust this past February.) Suzanne Lobel is a renowned author of medical and art books published by Random House. We'll enjoy a good discussion and a pre-Hanukkah candle lighting ceremony. Please reserve early, as space is limited. Check the Calendar for details.

Finally, it is not too soon to make your reservations for our Annual Retreat that takes

place on Monday & Tuesday, January 11-12, 2010. This year we are trying a new place: the Serra Retreat in Malibu. It is a breathtakingly beautiful site to relax and be together. Make your reservations with Lya Frank. See the Calendar for details.

L'Shana Tovah,

Marie Kaufman☆
President

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If your label doesn't show "08" and/or "09" in the upper right corner, we have not received your check for the past two years, and it indicates to us that you may no longer want to remain on our mailing list. We are a 501(c)(3) publicly supported non-profit organization, and contributions are tax deductible to the extent that they are gifts with no consideration received. Our annual dues are for the calendar year from January through December and the **2009 membership is past due now**. Please mail your annual membership checks for **\$30** or more to Child Survivors of the Holocaust, Los Angeles at the address on the bottom of the first page of this bulletin. Please indicate on your check the purpose of the payment so we can give you proper credit.

NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS

This newsletter is now published quarterly. In between issues, important information, such as the latest restitution news and upcoming programs and events, are sent out via e-mail. Additionally, we are now also emailing our newsletter to those who provided us with an e-mail address. **If you are not receiving e-mail notices** we don't have your current e-mail address. Please send them to John Gordon at janosg@ca.rr.com.

Congratulations to Ruth Birndorf on the marriage of her daughter Debbie.

Georg and I want to express our sincere thanks for the outpouring of love and kindness after the death of my mother. It has been very meaningful to us.

With fond regards, Milie Stern

Thank you from Idele Stapholtz for all the get-well cards and beautiful plant from the group.

Our prayers and best wishes for a speedy recovery and good health to:

Nina Gooen
Teresa Katz
Norman Klinenberg
Miriam Libraty
Mirjam Rozenfeld
Gabriele Silten
Idele Stapholtz

We wish good health and happiness to all our members celebrating birthdays and anniversaries in August, September and October.

FROM OUR MAIL BOX

We will make every effort to include as many letters and articles as possible in their entirety; however, space limitation may require editing. Please send your letters to Child Survivors of the Holocaust, Los Angeles, 1158 26th Street #438, Santa Monica, CA 90403-4698. Or you may send your letters directly to the Editor at janosg@ca.rr.com. Deadline for input to the next newsletter is October 15, 2009.

During the current debate of national healthcare the following article by Michael Berenbaum is very timely. It was an opinion piece sent to the Huffington Post on the issue of Nazi Medicine. Thanks to Michael for allowing us to publish it in our newsletter.

Nazi Medicine

It is the nuclear bomb of epithets, a shorthand way of tarnishing any opponent. In recent weeks, Rush Limbaugh and others repeatedly

compared President Obama to Adolf Hitler and his health care policies to Nazi tactics. More than one activist showed up at a town hall meeting brandishing a swastika sign and Obama's name.

"They were for abortion and euthanasia of the undesirables," Limbaugh said of the Nazis on his radio program. "As we all know, and they were for cradle-to-grave nationalized healthcare."

Reviewing what the Nazis actually did — and why — shows that such inapt comparisons reveal more about the attackers than the president's or Congress's current proposals.

A word of history: At the Nuremberg doctors trials of the late 1940s, the judicial process focused mainly on Nazi medical experiments. But scholars now regard standard Nazi medical practice — the so-called euthanasia program — as more serious, more all encompassing and more criminal. Long before World War II, Nazi physicians began with a mass sterilization aimed at propagating a master race. Doctors sterilized mentally retarded and congenitally ill Germans, designated by Nazism as "useless eaters," consuming scarce resources of the German nation still mired in depression. Worse, much worse, was to follow.

Within the war's first six weeks, Hitler signed an order (backdated to September 1, 1939 to give it the appearance of a war-time measure) giving two doctors "responsibility for expanding the authority of physicians... to the end that patients considered incurable according to the best available human judgment of their state of health, can be granted a mercy killing."

The Nazis invented a new term: "life unworthy of living."

Mass murder of the handicapped began slowly. At first, authorization was informal, secret and narrow in scope — limited to the most serious cases. From the Berlin Chancellory Tiergarten 4 (code named T-4), officials ordered a statistical survey of all psychiatric institutions, hospitals, and homes for chronic patients.

Within months the T-4 program enlisted virtually the entire German psychiatric community.

Three medical experts reviewed forms submitted during the survey without examining individual patients or reading detailed records. Theirs was the power to decide life or death. Patients ordered killed were transported to six killing centers: Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Hadamar, and Brandenburg. The SS donned white coats for the transports to give themselves the appearance of medical personnel.

The first killings were by starvation — passive, simple, natural. Then injections were used. Children were simply put to sleep, never again to awake. Sedatives soon became overdoses. Gassing became the preferred method of killing. False showers were constructed. Ph.D. chemists were employed. The process was administered by doctors, who killed 15 to 20 people at a time. Afterward, black smoke billowed from the chimneys as the bodies were burned.

A few doctors protested. Carl Bonhoeffer, a leading psychiatrist, helped his son Dietrich contact church groups urging them not to turn patients over to the SS. A few physicians refused to fill out the forms. One psychiatrist, Professor Gottfried Ewald of Gottingen, openly opposed the killing.

Growing public pressure, including a sermon on August 3, 1941, by Bishop Clemens August von Galen of Muenster, openly challenged the euthanasia program. "We must oppose the taking of innocent human life even if it were to cost us our lives," he argued.

On September 1, 1941, almost two years after it began, Germany appeared to discontinue the operation. In truth, it was merely driven underground. "Mercy killings" secretly continued until the end of the war. Some 200,000 Germans — what the Nazis termed Aryans, not Jews — were victims.

While T-4 continued in secret, mass murder was just beginning. Physicians trained in the

medical killing centers graduated to bigger tasks. Irmfried Eberl, M.D., who began his career in the T-4 program, became the commandant of Treblinka. His colleagues went on to Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz, where killing took on massive dimensions.

At the Nuremberg Doctors trial of medical personnel, the judges realized the need to enunciate ethical principles for physicians that would prevent them from ever engaging in such practices. The first principle articulated the universal right of individuals to make their own medical decisions, free from coercion. "The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential," it reads.

President Obama's health plan honors that very principle by entitling the patients to be reimbursed for consultations with their physicians to discuss end-of-life issues. That measure is the essence of humane and moral medical policy — the antithesis of Nazi medicine and Nazi practice.

(We should also consult with clergy to ensure that decisions are compatible with both science and faith.)

That is not to say there is no place for a Nazi analogy in this debate. The Nazis rose to power by mastering the art of propaganda, repeating lies so frequently and so widely that eventually people took them as truth. Hence the importance of seeking out the truth, and exposing those who would engage in such deceit.

Freud taught us about projection: Those who would compare Obama to Hitler or his policies to Nazism ought to look in the mirror.

Michael Berenbaum is Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. He was the project director of the creation of the U.S. Holocaust Museum and is the former director of its Research Institute.

We are pleased to report that Professor Michael Berenbaum has accepted the second year of a Visiting

Professorship at Chapman University, funded by the Gold/Weinstein families.

Tribute to Lili (Lilke) Majzner

Los Angeles and the world Jewish Community lost a dear friend this past July. Lili was a strong presence in keeping alive the Yiddish language, culture and literature. As the leader of the Yiddish Culture Club of Los Angeles, she tirelessly promoted Yiddishkayt by presenting lectures on literary and poetry works as well as musical programs. Lili was also a survivor of the Holocaust and was one of six women survivors featured in the documentary "Swimming in Auschwitz." She often attended our Pesach Seders with her best friends and Child Survivor members Fela and Nathan Gipsman and Regina and Jack Lewin. I had the privilege of sharing a long friendship with Lili and had a wonderful working relationship with her as we taught nursery school at the JCC. The world without Lili's voice will not be the same.

Marie Kaufman☆

FEDERATION NEWS

WFJCSH 21st Annual International Conference will be held in Boston (Newton Marriott Hotel) from Friday, October 30th to November 2nd. Conference registration is \$360.00 per person until **October 1**, \$410.00 for registration between October 2 and October 22, 2009. Registration will be closed on **October 22, 2009! Note deadline changes.** Partial conference registration is available

The Marriott Hotel has guaranteed the discounted rate of \$99.00 per night, for the duration of the conference and three days before and after the conference, subject to availability. Overnight parking is free to conference participants. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel through a Marriott website: <http://cwp.marriott.com/bosnt/wfjcs/> or through the Marriott's toll-free telephone number: 800.228.9290; use code JEHJEHA. The full registration packet is available on the Federation's website: www.wfjcs.org or call toll free at 877.258.7089. Other contacts are Marianne Kronenberg at 781.444.6262 (21stconference@gmail.com) and/or after

September 9th Eva Paddock at 617.491.4894. There will be optional post conference tours on November 2nd and 3rd.

Plenary programs considered at this time include:

- Dr. Deborah Dwork — Children During the Holocaust
- Greetings from Elie Wiesel
- Dr. Radu Ioanid — The Holocaust and the Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe and the Successor States of the Soviet Union
- Maestro James Conlon/Bob Elias — Recovered Voices: Music Silenced by the Holocaust — A Multi-Media Presentation
- Dr Deborah Lipstadt — Deniers of the Holocaust
- Rabbi Joseph Polak — Memoirs of a Life I Don't Remember
- Dr. Gerald Holton, Dr. Gerhard Sonnert — What Happened to the Children who Fled Nazi Persecution: Success and Trauma
- Dr. Hankus Netsky — Our Jewish Cultural Legacy: From Generation to Generation
- Rabbi Moshe Waldoks — Generation to Generation: An Informal Conversation About Our Jewish Future

There is a great need for speakers to tell their stories at the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust as the numbers of survivors dwindle and we need our exposure to the students — they will long remember it! If you are willing to speak, please call Marie Kaufman at 310.836.0779.

RESTITUTION / INSURANCE NEWS

There is no current new activity. For assistance with Article 2 payments and compensation for work in the Holocaust-era Ghettos,

please call the Holocaust Reparation Hotline at Bet Tzedek Legal Services at 323-549-5883.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Come to our **Annual Meeting** on Tuesday, **October 20th** at **7 PM** in the newly remodeled **Museum of Tolerance**, on 9786 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, at Roxbury. The meeting will include election of officers and board members who are finishing their second year. (Half of the board members are elected each year for a two-year term.) The five members standing for reelection are shown on the ballot included on the last page of the newsletter. Write in candidates are also accepted. The six remaining board members whose term will expire in 2010 are Lya Frank, Betty Gerard, Natalie Gold, Vera Hirtz, Marie Kaufman, and Phil Raucher.

Our usual summer get-together will take place at a **Regional Meeting** on Sunday, **September 13**, 2009 from 2-4 PM in the home of Vera Hirtz. Please RSVP to Vera at 310.472.5781. Erika Kahn, with Ross Peyson, the Outreach Coordinator for the Santa Barbara Jewish Federation, will present "*My Three Faces*," on connecting Holocaust survivors with at-risk youth.

Another **Regional Meeting** is scheduled for Sunday, December 6, 2009 2:00-4:00 PM in the home of Natalie Gold to celebrate the upcoming holiday of Chanukah. We will have candle lighting. Additionally, author Suzanne Lobel will discuss her book, "*At the Mercy of Strangers*," about her childhood in Belgium.

The **Annual Retreat** will take place on Monday/Tuesday, January 11-12 2010 at the Serra Retreat in Malibu. One day and night stay with three meals will cost \$100 double, and \$130 single. Additional meals can be purchased separately. Lya Frank at 310.315.2750 is taking reservations; please send your check to our mailbox address, which can be found on the bottom of the first page of this newsletter.

Please mark your calendar for our Passover

Seder to be held on **April 1, 2010** at 6:00 PM at the Adat Shalom Synagogue on Westwood Blvd, catered by Majestic Catering.

You are invited to participate in our new interest group: recommending books for our membership. If you have read a book recently that you believe would be of interest to child survivors, please send the relevant information (title, author, publisher, etc.) to our mailbox at the address on the bottom of the first page of this newsletter, or by e-mail to janosg@ca.rr.com.

To start, we have the following recommendations:

Tatiana de Rosnay: "Sarah's Key" – published by St. Martin's Griffin; available in paperback

Geraldine Brooks: "People of the Book" – a Penguin Book in paperback

Ha Jin: "A Free Life" – published by Vintage International; available in paperback.

The Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust presents the **Auschwitz tattoo numbers survey/photography** project. The blurred lines of a serial number on a forearm are the image of the Holocaust. The tattoos of the survivors symbolize the brutality of the concentration camps. There is no official document that identifies the people who were subjected to having these numbers placed on their arms. With this project, the museum is trying to make a visual documentation of this barbaric happening. If possible, please help to assemble information about as many people as can be reached. The museum needs a photograph of the person showing their tattoo; photo of the forearm with the number; close up of the number; full name (including maiden name if applicable), city and country where the person lives; the tattoo number written clearly. Please contact: Gabriella Y. Karin, c/o Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, 6435 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048; phone 323.934.7897; email: auschwitznumbers@earthlink.net.

VOTING BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Official nominees: — Vote for at least 5

1. RUTH BIRNDORF (incumbent)
2. JOHN GORDON (incumbent)
3. DAISY MILLER (incumbent)
4. LEA RADZINER (incumbent)
5. HENRY SLUCKI (incumbent)
6. _____ (write-in)

As you may know, according to our bylaws we are to have an election for members of the Board every year. The above nominees are for a two-year term, 2010-2011. Lya Frank, Betty Gerard, Natalie Gold, Vera Hirtz, Marie Kaufman, and Phil Raucher, were elected for a two-year term last year. All of us who receive this newsletter and are *paid-up* members are eligible to vote. The election is for Board members at large. The newly elected Board will make the designation for specific office. The ballot (page 6 of this newsletter) should be returned by **October 10, 2005** to Child Survivors of the Holocaust, Los Angeles; 1158 26th Street #438, Santa Monica, CA 90403-4698 unless you are voting in person on October 20th. **Please DO NOT REMOVE your mailing label from the back.** In case of husband & wife child survivors, a second ballot may be submitted with signature.☆

