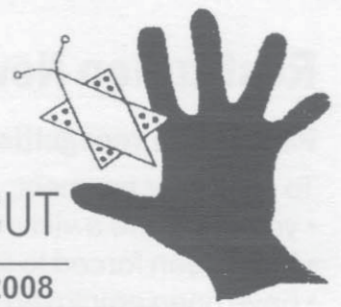


A publication of THE HOLOCAUST CHILD SURVIVORS OF CONNECTICUT

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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 repeated.

Organizational News

Annual Picnic

Our most popular event the annual picnic on Sunday, July 20th, was a great success. Thanks to Vicki Blank who so graciously hosted our group of sixty people in her backyard again. Eliana Matalon once more prepared for us a delicious buffet which featured Israeli food in honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. The feast ended with fruit tarts, Napoleons, fresh fruit and coffee. Every table had an Israeli and an American flag in an orange in addition to the flowers as a centerpiece. Meryl Kaplan and her partner from "Bach to Broadway" serenaded us with wonderful music. We stood to sing the Hatikvah Israel's national anthem. Judy Altmann, of course, led a group in dancing the horah which was not very easy on the uneven grass. Everybody had a wonderful time catching up with friends, eating and listening to the lovely music.

Purim Party

On Sunday, March 23rd, we held a Purim party at Temple Israel in Westport. We put on a hilarious Purim spiel in funny costumes and no scenery. Lou Reens played king Achashveros, Anita Schorr was Queen Esther, Nick Friedman was Haman, Charles Lobell had the part of Mordechai, Judy Altmann was Vashti, Regine Kallish and Henry Grossman were the guards. Agnes Vertes acted as the narrator. After the actors took their bow we had a raffle and almost everybody got a little gift. And, of course, we had delicious cakes and pastries to nosh on with plenty of coffee and tea.

Washington Conference

The World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust will hold its 20th annual conference from November 7- November 10 2008 at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. For more information call Jacques at 443-820-3290 or Louise at 301-530-6868 or you can download the registration forms from the web at: www.wfjcs.org.

Rededication Ceremony

This July Renee Glassner attended the rededication of the Jewish cemetery in her hometown Losice in Poland. She made a touching speech to the Polish participants. It was a beautiful ceremony that touched the heart of all who attended.



ABOVE: The Jewish cemetery of Losice, dedication ceremony.



ABOVE: Renee Glassner addresses the people of her hometown of Losice, Poland at the Jewish cemetery restoration ceremony on May 20, 2008

Save the Date!



**Sunday,
September 7**

We will get together in the
Westport Public Library
to screen

"I Have Never Forgotten You"
the story of Wiesenthal.

Restitution News

Payment in recognition of ghetto work

To qualify for payment:

- you had to be a victim of Nazi persecution
- have been forced to live in a ghetto
- have been employed without coercion during this time

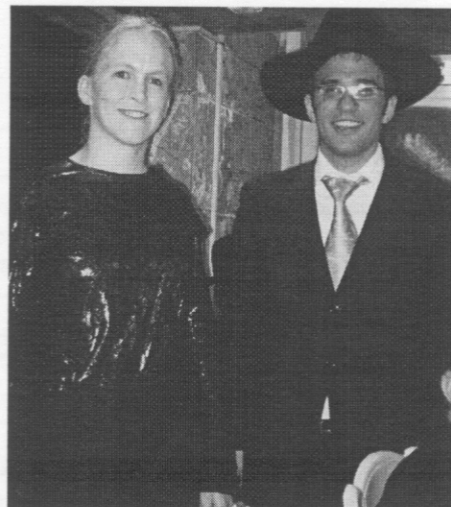
In order to be eligible you must have **volunteered** for work. You will need proof that you are alive by an official authority such as a bank or notary public and send a copy of your passport along with the application. You may download the application from claimscon.org or go to: http://badv.bund.de/antragsformular_en.pdf. If you have no internet call Agnes at 203-226-3092 and I will mail you an application.

Mail the completed application to:

Bundesamt für zentrale Dienste
Und offene Vermögensfragen
53221 Bonn
Germany

Should you need help with filling out the application call Joan Margolis at the Hartford JFS at 860-236-1927. In September a group of lawyers will be available in Bridgeport to help you with the applications as well as other questions free of charge. Time and place will be announced.

Mazal Tov to Renee and Marty Glassman



Moshe is the grandchild in Israel of the proud grandparents of Renee and Marty Glassner. Wedding is to take place on Nov. 27, 2008 in Israel. All are invited, contact Renee and Marty.

Membership News

Our sincere condolences to our member Vera Blau on the death of her husband **Emery** who passed away after a long struggle with cancer on April 26th.

Our heartfelt condolences to our member Jack Herz whose wife, **Dr. Sara Moss Herz**, passed away on May 7th after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. Dr. Herz, a clinical psychologist had offices in Westport, Greenwich, and Waterford, CT. She was also an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Southern Connecticut State University.

For many years, she served as President of the Board of Directors for Connecticut Renaissance, a drug and alcohol residential treatment program with facilities throughout Connecticut. Dr. Herz was also a volunteer interviewer at the Fortunoff Holocaust Memorial Archives for over twenty years, where she contributed substantially to the institutionalization of historical video archives of interviews with Holocaust survivors. Sara was also involved, on a pro-bono basis, in providing therapy and counseling to 9-11 survivors and she contributed her time helping to cook for the homeless at the Interfaith Housing Center in Westport. Sara was known in the community as an athlete and she was a committed runner since 1976. She completed 29 marathons throughout the U.S.

We mourn the passing of our longtime member Gaston Schmir. **Gaston Leonard Schmir**, Professor Emeritus Department of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry at Yale University, died July 2nd, at the age of 75. Professor Schmir was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1970. He courageously battled the disease for 38 years. Gaston was engaged in scientific research at the National Institutes of Health, Laboratory of Chemistry in the Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, from 1958-1960. He was a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service. Gaston was appointed to the Yale University faculty in the Department of Biochemistry in 1960. His research emphasis was in the area of enzyme mechanisms and related physical-organic chemistry.

In Memory of Irena Sendlerowa

1910-2008

Irena Sendler passed away on Monday May 12th, 2008 at 8:00 am CEST in Warsaw, Poland. A funeral service was held on Thursday, May 15th at noon CEST in Warsaw. Memorial services were held in numerous places, including Fort Scott, KS.

The life of Irena Sendler was one of great testimony, one of courage and love, one of respect for all people, regardless of race, religion and creed. She passed away peacefully, knowing that her message goes on. Our hearts and prayers go out to her worldwide family. She is gone, but will never be forgotten. Born in Warsaw, Poland, she lived most of her young life in Otwock. Irena Sendlerowa led the rescue of 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust in World War II. She was recently nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Her legacy of repairing the world continues, as good continues to triumph over evil. Irena Sendlerowa was 98 years old.



Henry Grossman at the Opening of the Michael Klahr Center Museum

On May 25th our members, Henry Grossman and Zophia Schulman, participated in the opening celebration of the Michael Klahr Museum at



the Holocaust and Human Rights Center in Portland Maine. The museum was created with the financial and spiritual support of Phyllis Jalbert, the widow of Michael Klahr in memory of her husband. Henry Grossman, Dennis Stern and Michael Klahr, all survivors, were canoeing enthusiasts who enjoyed this sport and each others company for many years.

The museum is extraordinary. The Chinese architect was able to capture the very essence of what a Holocaust Museum should portray. The uplifting wings of the museum validates man's ability to rise above

almost anything even genocide. In one of the pictures displayed in the museum, photographed in the infamous Buchenwald camp, Henry Grossman found himself in the extreme right corner of the third tier of the bunks.

Me, Chaim Grossman in Buchenwald on April 11, 1945

*Day of
Liberation
from
German
Hell*



Me, Henry Grossman
in Freedom Land
in the United
States of America
in the summer of
2007

Eli Wiesel

Nobel Prize
Winner, in
Buchenwald on
the day of Liberation.



Holocaust Trivialization

Holocaust trivialization is a tool for some ideologically or politically motivated activists to metaphorically compare phenomena they oppose to the industrial-scale destruction of the Jews in World War II by Germans, Austrians, and their allies. Examples include environmental problems, abortion, the slaughter of animals, the use of tobacco, and human rights abuses. None of these bear any fundamental resemblance to the manmade genocide of the 1940s.

Those who abuse Holocaust comparisons for their ideological purposes wish to exaggerate the evil nature of a phenomenon they condemn. With the Holocaust symbolizing absolute evil for many, they use it as an instrument for their purposes. The perceived evil to which they compare the Holocaust, however, does not share its major characteristics. These include the systematic defamation, exclusion, torturing, and destruction of specific people in a society. Another element is that all belonging to this category are targeted. Trivialization goes beyond hurting the sensitivities of Jews, by abusing the memory of the murdered victims as well.

The Environmental Holocaust

Environmentalists are one group among which Holocaust trivializers are found. They often regard global warming as the main contemporary threat to humanity. A newspaper article stated that it is no longer possible to deny global warming. Using the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which claimed it was 90 percent certain that global warming

was the result of human activity.

The writer concluded: "I would like to say we're at a point where global warming is impossible to deny. Let's just say that global warming deniers are now on a par with Holocaust deniers, though one denies the past and the other denies the present and future." Foxman of ADL stated.

Al Gore

Comparing potential ecological disaster to the Holocaust is not a new phenomenon. On 19 March 1989, the then senator from Tennessee, Al Gore, published an op-ed in the New York Times titled "An Ecological Kristallnacht. Listen." Gore called upon all humankind to heed the warning: "...the evidence is as clear as the sounds of glass shattering in Berlin."

In 2007 Gore, by then a Nobel Laureate and former vice-president, continued to use Holocaust imagery for environmental purposes. As part of his advocacy, twice in December 2007, he criticized many world leaders for ignoring the threat of climate change in the same way that former British prime minister Chamberlain and other world leaders had ignored the dangers posed by Hitler. Gore voiced the same sentiments as almost two decades earlier: "Once again world leaders waffle, hoping the danger will dissipate."

Opponents of Environmental Measures

Opponents of environmental measures sometimes also refer abusively to the Holocaust. In 2004 Andrei Illarionov, an economic adviser to President Putin, recommended that Russia should not sign

the Kyoto Protocol, which he called a death pact that would "strangle economic growth and economic activity in countries that accept the protocol's requirements." He likened the protocol to Auschwitz.

The Abortion Holocaust

Abortion opponents have probably mobilized the best-known distorters of the Holocaust. One of these was Pope John Paul II who, in his 2005 book *Memory and Identity*, compared abortion to the Holocaust. He wrote that both abortion and the murder of six million Jews were the result of humans under the guise of democracy usurping the "law of God."

Then-Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, claimed at the launching of the Pope's book that the Pope was not equating abortion with the Holocaust.

In another incident involving the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Cologne in Germany, Cardinal Joachim Meisner, "provoked much unrest when he put women who had had an abortion in a row with mass murderers like Hitler, Stalin and Herod. He compares abortion to the Holocaust and the abortion pill with Zyklon B, the gas used by the Nazis in the extermination camps." Paul Spiegel, the then president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said the cardinal had insulted the millions of victims of the Holocaust. He added that "The Catholic Church does not understand or does not want to understand that there is an enormous difference between mass genocide and what women do with their bodies."

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Spiegel also linked the Pope's remarks to the earlier statements by Cardinal Meisner.

In 2007, during the Republican primaries for the upcoming presidential elections, contender Mike Huckabee linked abortion to the Holocaust in a conference hosted by the Family Research Council. He said: "sometimes we talk about why we're importing so many people in our work force.... It might be for the last 35 years, we have aborted more than a million people who would have been in our work force had we not had the holocaust of liberalized abortion under a flawed Supreme Court ruling in 1973."

The Animal Holocaust

One category of Holocaust trivialization that has gained much publicity is comparing the slaughter of animals to the murder of Jews in the Holocaust. It is here that one finds the most detailed and perverse attempts at comparison to the Holocaust.

Much attention was garnered by the exhibition "Holocaust on your Plate" by the animal rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The Guardian wrote that the exhibition juxtaposes harrowing images of people in concentration camps with disturbing pictures of animals on farms. One photograph showing an emaciated man is next to another of a starving cow. Another shows a pile of naked human beings, next to a shot of a heap of pig carcasses.... Other images compare children behind barbed wire with a picture of pigs looking out

from behind bars; crowds of people, with cattle being herded into transports; and people crammed into bunks, with chickens in a battery farm.

Many attacked the PETA campaign and advertisements. Foxman of stated,

The effort by PETA to compare the deliberate systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights is abhorrent. PETA's effort to seek "approval" for their "Holocaust on Your Plate" campaign is outrageous, offensive and takeschutzpah to new heights.

...Abusive treatment of animals should be opposed, but cannot and must not be compared to the Holocaust. The uniqueness of human life is the moral underpinning for those who resisted the hatred of Nazis and others ready to commit genocide even today.

Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer had one of his fictional characters, Herman Gombiner, say in the story "The Letter Writer" that toward animals all humans are Nazis, and for animals every day is Treblinka. Karen Davis, who runs a sanctuary for chickens, makes a lengthy case for comparing animal suffering to the Holocaust. It contains one of the most perverse attacks on the memory of Holocaust victims, while referring to poultry:

The methods of the Holocaust exist today in the form of factory farming where billions of innocent, feeling beings are taken from their families, trucked hundreds of miles through all weather extremes, confined in cramped, filthy conditions, and herded to their deaths. During the Holocaust, hundreds of thou-

sands of men, women and children died from heat exhaustion, dehydration, starvation or from freezing to the sides of cattle cars. Those who arrived at the concentration camps alive were forced into cramped bunkers where they lived on top of other dead victims, covered in their own feces and urine.

A similar type of Holocaust trivialization is expressed by Charles Patterson, who according to his online biography is a social historian and a graduate of the Yad Vashem Institute for Holocaust Education. In his book *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, he argues that "A holocaust occurs while meat eaters turn the other way, denying that such horrors could possibly exist. Were the German and Polish people who knew the fate of those trucked to Buchenwald and Treblinka any less moral or guilty than those who comprehend the truth about what really happens to farm animals?"

In essence, these animal rights supporters who trivialize the Holocaust need first to humanize animals so as to develop their flawed discourse.

The Nuclear Holocaust

The aforementioned modes of Holocaust trivialization reflect attitudes that have permeated public discourse to some extent. Three other, less frequently mentioned categories are: the use of nuclear bombs, smoking, and alleged transgressions of international human rights laws.

Nuclear bombing is probably the one threat that comes closest in its effects to the Holocaust though still

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lacking many of its elements. Probably the best-known use of the expression "nuclear holocaust" was President George W. Bush's statement in 2007 that Iran's nuclear program threatened to put "a region already known for instability and violence under the shadow of a nuclear Holocaust."

The expression "nuclear holocaust" has long been in use. The BBC noted that, already in the 1960s at the then Scottish Office, "the somewhat apocalyptic question of how to bury all the dead after a nuclear holocaust, and who would be responsible was at the centre of a flurry of memos and meetings."

Tobacco and Human Rights Comparisons

Another abusive use of the term Holocaust is the "tobacco Holocaust" developed by Michael Rabinoff in his book, *Ending the Tobacco Holocaust: How Big Tobacco Affects Our Health, Pocketbook, and Political Freedom*, and *What We Can Do About It*. The author discusses the horrors of tobacco noting that, according to the World Health Organization, one billion people will die from smoking in this century.

The comparison is abusive because the damages of smoking result from voluntary actions that people inflict upon themselves; it thus misses the main element of the Holocaust—that it was imposed on the victims by others.

In 2005, Prof. F. Rüter of Amsterdam University said the United States' treatment of the prisoners in Guantánamo resembled the Nazis' treatment of those they detained. Needless to say, if that were true many, if not most, of the

prisoners would have been dead by the time the Dutch academic made this statement, let alone by now.

Miscellaneous

There are also more isolated examples of Holocaust trivialization that get media attention because they are made by individuals with public visibility. One such case was when Representative Steve King (R-IA) asserted in 2006 that "illegal immigrants are responsible for the deaths of 25 Americans a day through drug trafficking, drunk driving and sex crimes."

He added that this was a "slow-motion Holocaust," and was criticized by both the National Jewish Democratic Council and the ADL. Foxman wrote to King: "Your reference to a 'slow-motion Holocaust' demonstrates a profound lack of understanding about the nature and the magnitude of the crimes against humanity undertaken by Hitler and his regime."

That same year Maryland Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele equated the science involved in embryonic stem cell research with the Nazi experimentation on Jewish prisoners during the Holocaust. He made this comment after being asked about embryonic stem cell research at a meeting with the Baltimore Jewish Council. Steele apologized after he was criticized by the Jewish community and various politicians.

Commercial Trivialization

Holocaust images have crossed into additional realms outside of politics and history such as the fashion world, advertising, and general merchandising. Several examples are notable in both the Western and the Muslim world.

Cafepress.com is an American online marketplace with 2.5 million members offering "unique merchandise across virtually every topic." In 2006, this retailer carried products advertised as "Auschwitz souvenir T-shirts." One example of these T-shirts included the message: "My grandparents went to Auschwitz...and all I got was this lousy T-shirt." Across the shirt were the infamous words "Arbeit macht frei" from the entrance gate to Auschwitz. After the ADL contacted cafepress.com, the offensive items were removed.

Zara is a Spanish flagship clothing-chain company with over a thousand stores, including branches in Israel. In fall 2006, a handbag with a swastika design was sold in their stores but, after complaints, the company removed it. Esprit, an apparel manufacturer headquartered in Germany, carried jackets with swastikas imprinted on the buttons. The company stated that it was an error of production and recalled the jackets and the catalogs carrying pictures of this product.

Although both these firms withdrew their offensive products, the fact that such incidents still occur in major companies reveals a widespread modern-day insensitivity toward anti-Semitic imagery.

An Indian furniture dealer used swastikas and the title "NAZI collection" as part of a bedspread design. In reaction, the Indian Jewish community announced that it would file a suit against the company. The company said it had no intention of insensitivity toward Jews, that NAZI stood for "New Ar-

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rival Zone for India," and that the swastika was originally an ancient Hindu symbol that was appropriated by the Nazis.

Nazi symbols and Hitler icons can be found around the world in apparel, restaurants, bars, and as separate items for sale—a global indicator of the phenomenon of Holocaust trivialization for monetary gain. Although there are too many examples to list them all, these include a Nazi chess set for sale in a market in Istanbul, Turkey, a South Korean Nazi-themed bar; and swastika-print garments worn in London's trendy Soho neighborhood.

Advertising

Images of the Holocaust have crossed over into marketing and advertising all over the world. An advertisement for Solo Mobile, a wireless division of Bell Canada that was featured in fifty-one locations around Toronto and Vancouver, Canada, depicted a woman wearing a series of buttons. One of the buttons read: "Belsen was a gas." It referred to a contentious song by the Sex Pistols about Bergen-Belsen, a German concentration camp. These advertisements first went up at Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and were removed after the controversial images were brought to the attention of Bell Canada.

Using Hitler to promote companies and products is a worldwide phenomenon. Conqueror Real Estate, a property firm in Dubai, stood by its national campaign in the United Arab Emirates. The advertisement featured Hitler next to the tagline: "Conqueror, The World Is Yours." The general manager of the com-

pany said: "I'm making business, I don't have a political opinion. He's a famous person—bad or good, I don't care—and I want to attract the attention of readers. And yesterday we had a lot of response. We had complaints, but it was one of the busiest days of the year, too, so it has an effect."

Jewish Trivialization of the Holocaust

Some Jews also trivialize the Holocaust. Problems currently facing the Jewish people cannot be compared to the mass murder of six million. An article by Ohr Sameach, a Jerusalem-based Jewish outreach organization, calls the assimilation of Jews "the holocaust of assimilation." But the voluntary loss of Jewish practices is very remote from an imposed genocide.

Uri Orbach, a well-known Israeli religious journalist, referred to the problem of Jewish intermarriage as the "'White Holocaust' or 'Silent Holocaust,' the one that annually takes away many thousands of Jews who chose to intermarry." Once again mixed marriages are a free choice and part of a process that has nothing of the cruelty of murdering helpless Jews because of their identity.

Sarah Silverman, an American Jewish comedian, regularly jokes about the Holocaust. She mentions a Holocaust-survivor grandmother "who went to one of the 'better' concentration camps and got a tattoo that read 'bedazzled.'"

Conclusion

The above examples demonstrate that trivialization occurs in many and varied situations. They show

that, contrary to most other distortions of the Holocaust, the trivializers usually do not target Jews.

Holocaust trivialization very often selects a single element that somewhat resembles a component of the Holocaust as the basis of its abusive comparison. The essence of the distortion is that there are so many cruel elements of the Holocaust with which the compared phenomenon has no similarity.

As Holocaust trivialization is almost always based on a superficial use of comparisons, those who confront the trivializers limit themselves to ad hoc refutations of their claims or demands to stop commercialization and other abuses. Often this leads to apologies by those responsible

Returned Art to Be Displayed

Last fall our member, Constance Sattler, received a painting at a touching ceremony in Germany by Novis Corinth that was stolen by the Nazis from her uncle Curt Glass, an art collector and museum director. This painting along with many others will be exhibited at the Jewish Museum in Berlin from September 18, 2008 through January 25, 2009.

Jewish Partisans Are Being Investigated

An outrageous and dangerous situation has developed in Lithuania that may have far-reaching implications.

Basically, the Government of Lithuania instituted judicial investigations into alleged war crimes committed by Jewish partisans during World War II. They are questioning three Jewish partisans, two who live in Lithuania and one who lives in Israel. You can find out more on the Internet.

"The murderers are now becoming national heroes and we, the few surviving victims who took arms and fought murderers, are under investigation as criminals" said Yitzhak Arad, former chairman of Yad Vashem, who is the Israeli partisan being investigated. Lithuania killed one of the highest proportions of Jews to population from all of Europe, yet only three Lithuanians were tried as Nazi collaborators.