

# Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe deserve pensions from the German Government. The U.S. Senate agrees.

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 1997

His Excellency Helmut Kohl  
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Chancellor Kohl:

We, the undersigned members of the United States Senate, are writing to express our deep concern about the continued refusal of the German Government to pay pensions to the thousands of elderly Holocaust survivors living in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, even as generous "war victims pensions" are paid to veterans of the Waffen-SS and other Nazi military organizations living in these same countries and elsewhere.

Unlike their counterparts in the West, Jewish Holocaust survivors living in the formerly Communist nations - survivors of ghettos and concentration camps - receive no pensions. Some are entitled to a one-time payment of a few hundred dollars; others do not receive even that.

In stark contrast, many thousands of veterans of various Nazi military forces, who are living all around the world, are eligible for supplemental pensions. Your Government recently confirmed that over 3,000 veterans of Nazi military forces or their dependents currently living in the United States are receiving such pensions. German law even permits Nazi war criminals inside of Germany to receive these benefits.

Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the post-war Federal Republic, acknowledged that Germany would be judged by how it treated the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. We fully recognize that Germany has contributed billions of dollars in compensation and restitution these past fifty years, and it has, in so many ways and unlike so many of its neighbors, confronted its past squarely and honestly.

Yet it is precisely because of this admirable record, and the fact that Germany is now such a valued friend and trusted ally of the United States, that we find it distressing that your Government has refused to provide any meaningful compensation to this forgotten group of Holocaust survivors.

We hope you will address this matter with the utmost speed so that these remaining survivors of mankind's darkest hours are able to live out their final years with some measure of comfort and dignity.

Sincerely,

|                                         |                                           |                                                    |                                                         |
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|                                         |                                           |                                                    | Senator Charles Robb<br>Virginia                        |

The American Jewish Committee has long urged the German Government to provide pensions to Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe. We applaud the 82 United States Senators, led by Senators Dodd and Hutchison, who have added their voices to this humanitarian appeal.

## The American Jewish Committee

Robert S. Rifkind  
President

David A. Harris  
Executive Director

For further information, please contact us at 165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022.

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