

## **NEWS UPDATE MARCH 2010 | ADAR 5770**



### **Ghetto Pension Claims to be Re-Opened: Claims Conference Secures Commitment from Germany**

In meetings with the Claims Conference, the German Social Security Administration pledged that all Holocaust survivors who have applied and previously been rejected for German Social Security payments under the country's "Ghetto Pension Law" (ZRBG) will have their cases reviewed by the end of 2010.

The Claims Conference met last week with German officials to urge more rapid processing of cases and retroactive payments to applicants, and has been pressing these issues since court rulings in 2009 allowed re-evaluation of rejected applications. Today, the National Pension Board announced that if applicants are found to be entitled to a pension, in accordance with the court rulings, generally the payments will be backdated to January 1, 2005.

Following the decision in June 2009 of the German Federal Social Court (Bundessozialgericht) to allow reconsideration of claims for "ghetto pensions" from tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors previously rejected, the Claims Conference has been pressing for an expedited review of these applications. Out of 70,000 applicants, there remain 56,000 previously rejected applications from Holocaust survivors for review.

The applications will be processed according to the survivors date of birth in order to give priority to the oldest applicants.

Since the court rulings, 1,700 previously rejected applications have been approved. The German Social Security Administration has assured the Claims Conference that the rate of processing for the remaining 56,000 claims will be considerably faster in order to complete them by years end.

The 2009 court rulings relate to a number of issues of interpretation of the ghetto pension law, including the definition of "remuneration," "voluntary labor" and the existence of age limits. For an overview of the main issues, see the Claims Conferences website at <http://www.claimscon.org/zrbgmain>.

Prior to the court ruling, the Claims Conference had initiated a monitoring group established by the Ministry of Labor regarding implementation of the ZRBG law. The Claims Conference pressed for retroactive payments. In addition, the Claims Conference

asked for re-opening of cases without re-submission of documents by claimants. The German Social Security Administration began proactively reviewing all rejected ZRBG/Ghetto Pension claims.

**Applicants whose Ghetto Pension claims were denied do not need to request the re-opening of their claims in accordance with the court rulings of June 2009, nor do they have to contact the ZRBG offices in Germany to have their files reviewed.**

**However, applicants may contact the German Pension Board about the status of their claims and to inform the ZRBG office about changes of address, bank account etc.**

Contact information for applicants depends on their current country of residence. Information on regional pension institutions is at [www.claimscon.org/zrbgmain](http://www.claimscon.org/zrbgmain).

The "ZRBG 2009" Flyer prepared for distribution by Germanys Deutsche Rentenversicherung- National Pension Board is available online and by clicking the following links in:

[German](#), [English](#), [Russian](#), [Czech](#), [Slovakian](#), [Hungarian](#), [French](#), and [Hebrew](#).

The Claims Conference will continue to press on this issue of great importance to so many survivors, and to keep you informed of developments. The Claims Conference will continue to make available all information pertinent to Holocaust survivors through help centers, social service agencies and on our website at [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org).

- [German Social Security: Regional Pension Institutions](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About German Social Security for Work in a Ghetto \(ZRBG\). Updated June 2009](#)

The Claims Conference is not involved in the administration, implementation or processing of applications for this program.

The information presented herein is intended for information purposes only and solely as a general guide. The information is not intended as legal advice. It is a summary of specific issues and does not represent a definitive or complete statement of the programs and policies of the agencies or governments mentioned. The information may not address the special needs, interests and circumstances of individual recipients. Individual situations differ and recipients are urged to seek individual advice. Individuals seeking specific information on a program are urged to contact the relevant program or to consult their social service agency or help center representative. To the best of our knowledge the information is correct as of the date of this document and this information may change subsequent to the said date.

March 19, 2010

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The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) represents world Jewry in negotiating for compensation and restitution for victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs. The Claims Conference administers compensation funds, recovers unclaimed Jewish property, and allocates funds to institutions that provide social welfare services to Holocaust survivors and preserve the memory and lessons of the Shoah.

For more information: [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org)

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