Im Geviert
Diálogos de Alemania e Iberoamérica

Segunda Guerra: noticias sobre los programas de reparaciones

11/11/2010

Por Giovanni B. Krähe

Segunda Guerra y criminalidad: 42 millones de dólares en falsas reparaciones

Revisando las fuentes utilizadas para este post sobre el "efecto Auschwitz", descubrimos este reciente comunicado (9/11/2010) del departamento de justicia de NYC sobre hechos criminosos en relación a las reparaciones solicitadas a Alemania en el contexto de la Segunda Guerra. Se trata de un escándalo preocupante porque involucra al prestigioso Claims Conference, el *Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany*. Según las investigaciones, no se trataría de un caso aislado de corrupción, sino de un "sistema" que funciona desde hace un buen tiempo (aprox. 42 millones US.) y responsabiliza a un ex-director del *Claim Conference* (link fuente). Según las investigaciones periodísticas (link fuente), el sistema consistía en colocar avisos de periódicos en las zonas de Brighton Beach, barrio di Brooklyn, conocido por ser residencia de un gran número de emigrados rusos. Se buscaba a todas aquellas personas que pudiesen cumplir con los criterios de "víctima del holocausto". Cuando la persona no cumplía los requisitos, los implicados manipulaban los datos de nacimiento, documentos de apoyo y hasta creaban cartas donde se contaban historias personales sobre persecusiones inventadas completamente (sobre esto último cfr. el post "efecto Ausschwitz"). El comunicado del FBI puede leerse aquí. El debate académico a partir de la prensa europea está iniciando todavía. Varios medios ya se están ocupando, la Agencia ANSA italiana (agencia central de prensa, aquella que da la info. a los demás medios) ya reproduce la noticia, también lo hace el diario israelí HAARETZ . No hemos encontrado fuentes de prensa en LA. Detalles del comunicado de prensa del Departamento de justicia de NYC puede leerse en este documento (el mismo de la imagen y del FBI, clicar para ampliarlo). A continuación el resumen de la noticia de la prensa israelí HAARETZ:

FBI arrests 17 for defrauding U.S. Holocaust fund

Ring of suspects used forged documents to claim funds paid by Germany to victims of the Nazis, prosecutors claim.

FBI investigators on Tuesday arrested 17 people in New York in connection with a $42.5 million organized fraud against a compensation fund for Holocaust victims.

The U.S. Attorney's Office is charging the 17, who include six current and former staff members of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Claims Conference, which issues payments to Jewish Holocaust victims, with making false financial claims using false documents.

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"We are outraged that individuals would steal money intended for survivors of history's worst crime to enrich themselves," said Conference chairman Julius Berman. "It is an affront to human decency."

The scheme was discovered late last year when Conference officials noticed that several claimants had falsified information to receive pensions from the Hardship Fund, set up by the German government to make one-time payments of $3,600 to Jewish victims of Nazism who emigrated from Soviet bloc countries.

In July 2010, the Claims Conference suspended 202 pensions with a total value of $7 million. Since then, it has unscovered suspected fraud in another 456 pensions worth an additional $24.5 million. It also suspects false claims in 4,957 one-time payments under the Hardship Fund, with a total value of $18 million,.

The Claims Conference said that no Holocaust victims were deprived of any funds because of the crime, and pledged full cooperation to help authorities bring the fraudsters to justice

(Link HAARETZ)

The Hardship Fund pays a one-time payment of approximately $3,600 to victims of Nazi persecution who evacuated the cities in which they lived and were forced to become refugees. Members of the conspiracy submitted fraudulent applications for people who were not eligible. Many of the recipients of fraudulent funds were born after World War II, and at least one person was not even Jewish. Some conspirators recruited other individuals to provide identification documents, such as passports and birth certificates, which were then fraudulently altered and submitted to corrupt insiders at the Claims Conference, who then processed those applications. When the applicants received their compensation checks, they kept a portion of the money and passed the rest back up the chain.

From the investigation to date, approximately 4,957 Hardship Fund applications from 2000 through 2009 appear to be fraudulent. These applications resulted in a loss to the Hardship Fund of approximately $18 million. The Article 2 Fund makes monthly payments of approximately $411 to survivors of Nazi persecution who make less than $16,000 per year, and either (1) lived in hiding or under a false identity for at least 18 months; (2) lived in a Jewish ghetto for 18 months; or (3) were incarcerated for six months in a concentration camp or a forced labor camp.

(Link FBI)

Faked Documents

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany — also known as the Claims Conference — provides assistance to victims of Nazi persecution by supervising and administering several funds that make reparation payments. Applications for disbursements are processed by employees in Manhattan, who must confirm that the applicants meet the specific criteria for fund disbursements. The criminal complaint alleges that staffers of the Claims Conference approved more than 5,000 fraudulent applications for aid and then distributed the assistance funds among themselves and outside co-conspirators.

(Link RFE).

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Southern District of New York

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ELLEN DAVIS,
EDELI RIVERA,
JESSIE ERWIN
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

FBI
JIM MARGOLIN, RICHARD KOLKO
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 384-2720, 2715

MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES 17 PEOPLE WITH PARTICIPATING IN $42.5 MILLION FRAUD ON ORGANIZATION THAT MAKES REPARATIONS TO VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION

Six Corrupt Insiders Allegedly Processed Thousands Of Fraudulent Applications For Payments Meant For Actual Victims Of The Holocaust

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JANICE K. FEDARCYK, the Assistant Director-In-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced today the unsealing of criminal charges against seventeen alleged members of a long-running scheme that defrauded programs established to aid survivors of Nazi persecution out of more than $42 million. Employees of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the "Claims Conference"), which administered the programs, were supposed to process and approve legitimate applications. Instead, they allegedly approved over 5,500 fraudulent applications, resulting in payouts to applicants who did not qualify for the programs. In exchange, these insiders kept a portion of the money for themselves and their co-conspirators.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "If ever there was a cause that you would hope and expect would be immune from base greed and criminal fraud, it would be the Claims Conference, which every day assists thousands of poor and elderly victims of Nazi persecution. Sadly, those victim funds were themselves victimized. Without the extraordinary cooperation of the Claims Conference in ferreting out this alleged scheme to defraud them, it never would have been exposed. We thank them for their assistance. With our partners at the FBI, we will

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bring to justice all those who would callously line their own pockets by looting a lifeline for Holocaust survivors."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge JANICE K. FEDARCYK said: "Each of the defendants played a role in creating, filing and processing fraudulent claims on behalf of non-qualifying applicants -- and dividing up the spoils. Funds established and financed by the German government to aid Holocaust survivors were siphoned off by the greedy, and not paid out, as intended, to the worthy. This was a brazen miscarriage of the compensation programs."

As alleged in the Criminal Complaint and other charging documents unsealed today:

The Claims Conference, a not-for-profit organization which provides assistance to victims of Nazi persecution, supervises and administers several funds that make reparation payments to victims of the Nazis, including "the Hardship Fund" and "the Article 2 Fund," both of which are funded by the German government. Applications for disbursements through these funds are processed by employees of the Claims Conference's office in Manhattan, and the employees are supposed to confirm that the applicants meet the specific criteria for payments under the funds.

As part of the charged scheme, a web of individuals -- including six of the employees who worked for the Claims Conference -- systematically defrauded the Article 2 Fund and Hardship Fund programs for over a decade. As explained in the Complaint, the Claims Conference first suspected the fraud in December 2009, and immediately reported their suspicions to law enforcement, which conducted a wide-reaching investigation resulting in the charges unsealed today.

The Hardship Fund pays a one-time payment of approximately $3,600 to victims of Nazi persecution who evacuated the cities in which they lived and were forced to become refugees. Members of the conspiracy submitted fraudulent applications for people who were not eligible. Many of the recipients of fraudulent funds were born after World War II, and at least one person was not even Jewish. Some conspirators recruited other individuals to provide identification documents, such as passports and birth certificates, which were then fraudulently altered and submitted to corrupt insiders at the Claims Conference, who then processed those applications. When the applicants received their compensation checks, they kept a portion of the money and passed the rest back up the chain.

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From the investigation to date, approximately 4,957 Hardship Fund applications from 2000 through 2009 appear to be fraudulent. These applications resulted in a loss to the Hardship Fund of approximately $18 million.

The Article 2 Fund makes monthly payments of approximately $411 to survivors of Nazi persecution who make less than $16,000 per year, and either (1) lived in hiding or under a false identity for at least 18 months; (2) lived in a Jewish ghetto for 18 months; or (3) were incarcerated for six months in a concentration camp or a forced labor camp.

The fraud on the Article 2 Fund involved doctored identification documents in which the applicant's date and place of birth had been changed. The fraud also involved more sophisticated deception, including altering documents that the Claims Conference obtains from outside sources to verify a person's persecution by the Nazis. Some of the detailed descriptions of persecution in the fraudulent Article 2 applications were completely fabricated.

From the investigation to date, approximately 658 Article 2 Fund cases processed by the Claims Conference have been determined to be fraudulent, from approximately 1993 through 2009. Those cases have resulted in a loss to the Claims Conference of approximately $24.5 million.

* * *

Eleven defendants were arrested this morning. Charges against five other defendants, four of whom have pled guilty, were unsealed today. The names of all of the defendants, along with the charges and maximum penalties, are included in a chart below.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the FBI. He also thanked the Claims Conference for bringing this matter to the FBI's attention and for its extraordinary cooperation in this investigation, which he noted is ongoing.

The case is being handled by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys REBECCA ROHR and LISA ZORNBERG are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaints are merely accusations and the defendants charged in the Complaints are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defendants in U.S. v. Semen Domnitser, et al.

Defendant	Residence	Charges	Penalties
Semen Domnitser	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison imprisonment; fine of up to $250,000
Valentina Romashova	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Money Laundering	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000 on the conspiracy count and up to $500,000 on the money laundering count
Polina Staroseletsky	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Polina Berenson	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Witness Tampering	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000
Polina Breyter	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Liliya Ukrainsky	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Galina Trutina-Demchuk	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Marina Zaytsova	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Witness Tampering	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000
Dora Grande	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Polina Aroshina	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Abram Grinman	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Tatyana Grinman	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000

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Defendants previously charged

Defendant	Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalties
Faina Davidson	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud	20 years in prison; fine of up to $250,000
Raisa Belgorodskaya	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Mail Fraud; one count of Witness Tampering	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000 on each count
Polina Toikach	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Mail Fraud	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000
Rozaliya Brodetskaya	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Mail Fraud	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000
Esfira Bas	Brooklyn, NY	One count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud; one count of Mail Fraud	20 years in prison on each count; fine of up to $250,000

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