

EAST GERMANY SETTLEMENT OF JEWISH CLAIMS

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- Following the signing of an agreement by the United States and the German Democratic Republic, the State Department announced that claims by Jewish victims of Nazi persecution against East Ger-

many will be discussed between the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and an East German "private organization" known as the Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters. According to

U.S. officials the Claims Conference, whose offices are in New York City, will seek to negotiate a lump settlement of claims for Jewish victims or their heirs all over the world, including those living in the U.S. and Israel. They said the East German government refused to deal with the Claims Conference because it is a non-governmental body but agreed that the "private" organization could consider the claims.

The Claims Conference had negotiated with West Germany which as a result paid about \$15 billion as reparations for Jewish victims of the Nazi holocaust. In addition, West Germany paid Israel in a separate bilateral governmental agreement reached in 1952, a sum of \$715 million in goods and services over a 12-year period. State Department officials said the question of payment by East Germany to Israel had not arisen during the negotiations. East Germany's position has been that it is not responsible for the persecutions by the Nazis and has no connection with the Nazi crimes. In the negotiations on diplomatic relations, U.S. officials pointed out that the enormity of the crimes against the Jews and others is so great that refusal by the East Germans to make reparations and ignore the claims would not be acceptable to the U.S. American Jewish leaders hailed the State Department announcement as long overdue acknowledgement by

East Germany of its "legal and moral obligations." Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said the "Jewish community will carefully monitor" the discussions.

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