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Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies
Mason Library – Keene State College
229 Main Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03435-3201

Coordinator of Educational Outreach, Mr. Tom White

Dear Tom:

Viewing the DVD has moved me. Please convey my letter as widely as you wish, especially to the participants.

The celebration was of classic simplicity and perfection. It was truly keyed to our time. Community leaders, some of recognized by their uniforms, expressed its importance. Candles were lit in honor of the dead and their message. Every word spoken held a meaning. A perfect choir found perfect rendering of Hebrew and English texts. All groups of society, denominations and many young persons, not even born at the time of the events were represented. The observance was forging all together and, at the end, the memorial candles were carried to the street, to shed their light at all the people. Prayers for my recovery were included.

You have brought a message of affection to my home where I am recouping from the aftereffects of my stroke, which could take another few months. I know it will be accelerated by your words.

But the event had an additional meaning for me.

For many years I have tried to bring the message of the Holocaust to new generations. I am the last rabbi, who led Jewish communities through the trials of the Nazi time and became an eye witness and sufferer in the concentration camp. The gist of my works, next to offering a picture of the time, rests on the call of everlasting responsibility by generations, way beyond ours. New generations have no guilt for the deeds of their ancestors,

but have a never ending duty of educating new generations to responsibility. This I learned from the prophet's words.

Ezekiel 18 (excerpts mine) states: "All lives are mine, the life of the parent and the life of the child are both mine. A person who sins, only he shall die. Is a man righteous and does what is just and right ... has he executed true justice between man and man, he has follows my laws – he is righteous such a man shall live, declares the Lord God. Suppose he has a son who is... a shedder of blood and this son now has gotten a son who has seen all the sins committed, but he has taken heed and not committed them... the son shall not be punished for the sins of the father. He shall live. A person who sins he alone shall die not his child."

"Moreover if the wicked one repents of all the sins he has committed and keeps my laws and all that is just and fair, he shall live, he shall not die. Is it my desire that a wicked person shall die?" says the Lord God, "it is not. It is in fact that he shall return from his deeds and live."

"Cast away all the sins by which you have offended and get yourself a new heart and new spirit that you may not die. For it is not my desire that anyone shall die", declares the Lord God, "repent therefore and live."

When all eyewitnesses of the Holocaust will have died this duty of bearing responsibility remains for all generations.

This happened in connection with the recent service at Keene. The witness, namely myself, could not come, to speak of the past as he knew it and the service was rapidly transformed from being only a memorial to being a social accounting as well, an enduring task.

This has moved me. Keene stands at the forefront and example. When all the survivors of the Holocaust have been claimed by death, the task of social accounting and rebuilding will still continue.

I could not join you, and this fact gave you an additional emphasis to the event, social justice. May it remain and set a general pattern. God bless you for it. You have moved me, I am deeply grateful.

With the best wishes for the New Year and your work and warm regards,



Leo and Gunda Trepp