



“HOLLYWOOD, HITLER & CARL LAEMMLE: The Story of an Unsung Hero”

The birth of Hollywood is a remarkable story of innovation and ingenuity. It is also an American-Jewish story - one in which Carl Laemmle, an immigrant from Germany, played an enormous role. Laemmle's greatest legacy, however, stems from what he did during the last two years of his life. **On Sunday morning November 8th, at our annual Kristallnacht commemoration, Congregation Or Shalom in Orange will celebrate the life-saving deeds of Carl Laemmle.**

By 1936, the circumstances of the Jewish community in Nazi Germany had become life threatening. That year, Carl Laemmle retired from his position as founder and president of Universal Pictures, and threw himself into the work of bringing as many of his relatives and former townspeople to safety on American shores. **In November 1938, in the aftermath of the horrors of Kristallnacht, Laemmle began reaching out to anyone he could possibly save from the clutches of the Nazi regime.** Pressed by Secretary of State Cordell Hull to explain his fervor and generosity on behalf of “complete strangers”, Laemmle wrote: *“...It is simply a matter that touches me deeply and I, for one, am willing to go to the limit in helping these poor unfortunates...”* In the end, Carl Laemmle rescued hundreds of people from the Holocaust. The precise number of refugees he shepherded to safety in the United States is unknown; **historians agree that it was at least 250.**

Our Kristallnacht program will begin at 9am with a power-point presentation by Thomas Doherty, professor of American Studies and chair of the American Studies Program at Brandeis University. Professor Doherty is the author of the acclaimed book, “Hollywood and Hitler: 1933-1939”.

At approximately 10am, Senator Richard Blumenthal will present a commendation to the Laemmle family, who will receive it on behalf of their beloved “Uncle Carl”. Surrounding the Senator and the Laemmle family will be several of the hundreds who are alive today because of the life-saving deeds of Carl Laemmle.

ALL ARE WELCOME!