

ארגון עולמי של יהודי בוקובינה
מפעלי טעד והנצחה של יהודי בוקובינה
המשרד המרכזי רח, ארנון 12, תל אביב 63455
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Fund for social assistance and eternization of Bukovinian Jewry
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June 29, 2003

To: Mr. Israel Singer, President
Mr. Julius Berman, Chairman
Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, Inc.
New York

From: Yitzhak Artzi

Dear Sirs:

Because of the importance of the item, the proportion between allocations for social purposes (80%) and cultural purposes (20%), I want to express my attitude.

I do this as a member of the Directorate but also as one of the veteran members of the Allocations Committee. During the past decade, I amassed rich experience in attending all the meetings of the advisory committees, visiting on the spot our social and cultural institutions, including the FSU, and initiating and organizing the Keren, our first foundation for direct and individual assistance to survivors.

Only after stormy discussions with the late Akiva Lewinsky, chairman of the Allocations Committee, did we succeed in replacing the policy of exclusive support of nursing beds and started with projects of direct assistance for the survivors' welfare and culture.

Until the first allocations for education, documentation, and research, the main instrument on behalf of the Claims Conference was the Memorial Foundation. During all the years, I was one of the activists in the Foundation. Thus, one of my assets is my personal experience.

The 80% - 20% ratio was not born in a matter of caprice but was based on study of the survivors' needs at the end of the century:

- * the average age of the survivors;
- * the immediate social needs;
- * changes in the practice of welfare and medical institutions that serve survivors: the activities of other Jewish organizations, like the Joint; and the changing policies of non-Jewish institutions;
- * the appearance on the map of big institutions for the study of the Holocaust, learning, research, the stringent needs of the new generation, antisemitism, Holocaust denial, a growing interest in certain circles and a weakening of interest among the young generation;
- * the process of disappearance of the survivors' generation, of those who can tell the story.

Our millions of dollars invested over the years made a tremendous contribution. After fifty years of fruitful activities in supporting culture, research, and documentation, due to its financial crisis the Memorial Foundation has reduced its involvement radically.

We developed a modus operandi: permanent involvement in what was being done. The members of the Advisory Committees, as well as staff members, audited the allocations, were directly and personally involved. We attained a double goal: developing projects of individual and collective social assistance, developing main educational institutions such as Yad Vashem, Lohamei Haghetot, Massuah, the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum, Yiddishpil; supporting special projects such as the March of Life, local learning institutions, museums dedicated to presenting the Holocaust, etc., etc., etc.

Our preparatory documents for the meetings, and our discussions, show that our financial policy was based on good assessments.

What are the main arguments for changing the ratio?

- * New needs. During all the years, we challenged old and new needs. They were always satisfied.
- * Could somebody convince me that the needs for cultural activities are unchanged and that we are allowed to reduce the existing budget?

I regret to say that, statistically, the young generation's interest in the Holocaust is decreasing.

- * Due to the new economic policy in Israel, all budgets for culture have been drastically reduced. An important educational Holocaust institution cannot accept pupils who are interested in spending the summer vacation in Holocaust studies because of lack of salaries for lecturers.

Israel's entire educational system is in danger. Is this the time to revise structure that can show big achievements?

The change of generations, the disappearance of the eyewitnesses, the reductions in the budgets of our institutions in Israel - is this the proper moment to reduce?

I think that if we assess the realities of our activities, we had to find answers to satisfy additional social and cultural needs, but not on account of our cultural needs.

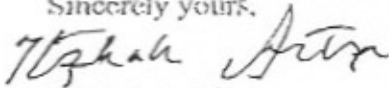
I warn about dangerous experiences. In the best case, we will obtain a small sum which will spoil the structure of our cultural work but will not be sufficient to satisfy serious social needs.

If some of us here doubt the priorities in using the money, I would propose to set up a small commission of experts to assess our contribution to the development of the social and cultural network and look for justified necessities in both areas.

Instead of touching an experienced structure, let us go ahead on the basis of the experience that we have amassed.

If some of us see an urgent need to change, let's check out activities before endangering our present work.

Sincerely yours,



Yitzhak Artzi

cc: Mr. Roman Kent
Mr. Moshe Sanbar
Mr. Gideon Taylor