



16th May 2003 SUITE 5, 107 GLOUCESTER PLACE, LONDON W1U 6BY  
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Mr Julius Berman  
Conference on Jewish Material Claims  
15 East 26th Street  
Room 906  
NY 10010  
USA

Dear Mr. Berman

You asked for our opinion as Directors of the Claims Conference with regard to the allocation of funds between social institutions and funding of nursing homes and individuals. I have been a member of the Claims Conference for many years and at the time of Nahum Goldmann it was already quite clear that 10 or 20% of the gross funds available would be allocated for educational and social institutions which would benefit the Jewish community on a wider level to remind different generations of the meaning of the Holocaust and what the nightmare had meant in the past and that it was a warning for the future for religious and racial tolerance.

The museums we have helped to build in Israel in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are surely examples of the importance which we attached to this many years ago and which have played a major role in educating world Jewry as well as Israelis on the history of our people.

The responsibility of our work is of course to care for all the victims of Nazi persecution today who are still alive and there are certainly few of them, who survived this long but, those who did not survive and those who we are fortunate to be able to care for will surely want their children and grandchildren and even great grandchildren to know what they suffered and why it is important to carry on the traditions of our difficult diverse beliefs and to make sure that the world within which we live now will be a better world for the future.

The late Rene Cassin was the President of the Alliance Israelite Universelle and as far as I know, was a member of the Board of the Claims Conference at the beginning. He was the outstanding lawyer who wrote the Declaration for Human Rights for the United Nations and who was motivated to do something for world human rights to avoid the catastrophe which our people

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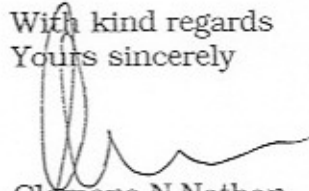
THE CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT COUNCIL OF REFORM AND LIBERAL RABBIS  
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have suffered from. It was his wish that everything should be done within the Jewish community to show the wider world the consequences of right and left wing fanaticism and the horrors of crazy ideologies which continue to shake the world. Namely, it is always easy to kill a few million people so that the rest will live in peace and happiness which has been such a disgraceful and horrific ideology for centuries. Any survivor who feels any responsibility for the opportunities which he has had in living in a decent society since the Third Reich must surely appreciate what tolerance and understanding have meant to him or her. Most of the survivors have managed today to have earned a realistic living, to have received either a State pension or a combination of private pensions with the State and been able to save some money. Those who are not able to live in dignity need of course to be helped much more like those living in Eastern Europe but those of us in the West and even in Israel sometimes forget how well off we all are compared to what the situation was when we immigrated to the different countries which became our home and our shelter and which many of us deeply love today.

My family escaped from Hamburg in Germany and I personally was 3 years old when I came to Great Britain. I therefore feel that I am entitled to make these remarks. My parents and I suffered a great deal in that we were separated from each other for nearly 1 year. We lost 45 of our own family, many of them cousins of mine who would today also be of the same age as myself. Their descendants are no longer with us but those who are all prefer to give something back to the Jewish community and to the countries where they have lived and been able to develop than to use the money only for their own use. Some of them are not well off but are proud and have dignity. Many of them have never wanted any publicity whatsoever to share the sorrows which they have suffered and I am among those who have very rarely even mentioned what my family have gone through but I was so upset by the letter sent to us from the survivors as selfish and inward-looking that I felt I needed to express these feelings to you. In addition, the people who wrote this letter know perfectly well that the funds which are available today for all survivors outside institutional donations is far in excess of anything imaginable even 5 years ago. Therefore, the Dollar value to each individual will surely give them some dignity when they are in great difficulties. I am also conscious that many survivors in old age become less and less secure in their feelings, irrespective of their financial situation and suffer from terrible feelings of insecurity. It is essential that we have institutions for these survivors to go to where they can communicate their problems with other people and share the worries which are inevitable for those who are retired and are unsure of their economic future.

I believe that we in the Claims Conference can be proud of what we have achieved both for the individual and for collective support for those organisations who examine the problems of the Holocaust both as museums and as educational institutions. I myself am today active in many of these fields including the Chairmanship of a non-Governmental organisation at the United Nations which strives to show to the non Jewish world how we Jews do care about all our brethren.

With kind regards  
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clemens N Nathan', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Clemens N Nathan  
c.c. Mr S Kagan