



**Minister for Jerusalem  
& Diaspora Affairs**

July 18, 2003

Mr. Israel Singer  
Mr. Julius Berman  
Mr. Gideon Taylor  
Conference on Jewish Material Claims  
Against Germany  
15 East 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, New York 10010

Dear Julie, Israel and Gideon,

I look forward to representing the State of Israel at my first board meeting of the Conference on Material Claims.

In the last few months, I have met with numerous survivors who take an active interest in the work of the Conference, and I have tried to learn as much as I can about its work.

I firmly believe that the first and primary responsibility must be to the survivors who suffered so much that words cannot begin to convey what all of us feel.

Hitler was dedicated to wiping us out. His plan was to rid the world of the Jews and their tradition. Our synagogues, Torah scrolls and cultural symbols were defiled; our People were systematically murdered.

That which differentiated between those who perished and those who survived, was often whim, chance and fortune. But all who survived had an iron determination to persevere and this determination has been and continues to be a great resource of strength for the Jewish People.

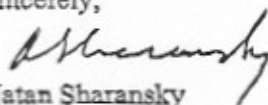
The same determination must drive us all to make sure that our history, tradition and culture flourishes, and that the story and lesson of the Holocaust is forever remembered. When we who will attend this coming Board meeting are no longer here to remember the great achievements East European Jewry and the great catastrophe which ended it all, there must be others to perpetuate the memories and carry on our work. This too, is our sacred obligation.

Our parents and grandparents prevailed against the brutal Nazi assault, but we and our children are falling prey to the blandishments of freedom, democracy, and increasing social acceptance. The rate of assimilation is known to all of us. So, too, the solution: education. We need to make sure that our children are properly educated about our history and about our shared values and common destiny. For if Judaism perishes, what have we achieved by surviving? If Judaism perishes, who really won the War?

The role of educating our Jews and the world about the Holocaust is a second primary responsibility of the Claims Conference. Our performance must be judged by how we fulfill both responsibilities—first providing for each and every survivor, and secondly educating those who survived us to herald our cause.

As the representative of a sovereign, proud, and strong Jewish State, I promise to do all that I can to further our goals.

Sincerely,

  
Natan Sharansky