

11 June 2003

Dr. Israel Singer
President
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc.
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Dear Israel,

Recently a matter was brought to my attention that I would define, in gentle terms, as most perturbing, namely the demand by certain factions in the Claims Conference to terminate or reduce the established Claims Conference allocations for Shoah remembrance. In light of the gravity of this matter, I saw fit to share my views on the matter, although I am not a member of the organization.

Holocaust commemoration is not just a monument, the establishment of a memorial to the victims and remembrance of an historical event, but also turning remembrance into a living factor in shaping future generations.

Following the terrible Holocaust perpetrated against our nation, the world can not return to what it was - it must not - and it is our obligation to make certain that it does not. We have a responsibility to educate coming generations about the horrors of the Shoah and its message, to ensure that this chapter in history will become central in shaping the identity of every Jewish child as a Jew, and, let us hope, every child as a human being. We must research the Shoah and delve into its appalling foundations, for only thus will we be able to learn the enormous lesson that is its message. We must document every scrap of information, every name and every event, in order, as thoroughly as possible, to form a true and accurate picture of the Shoah.

Especially today, when we perceive a rise in the phenomena of Holocaust denial and minimalization, it is incumbent upon us to strengthen research and documentation; especially today, when we are witness to the fact that there is too large a percentage of Israeli children who know little or nothing about the Shoah, not to mention non-Jewish children worldwide, it is our duty to bolster Holocaust education.

We, the Holocaust survivors, have seen, and see today, as our mission to tell the world and tell the younger generation what happened. The numbers of our generation are dwindling and soon there will no longer be those who can bear witness to the horrors and tell the story

firsthand. This is the last chance to record the Shoah's remaining witnesses, and provide future generations with as much "living material" as possible about the Shoah.

Bearing these thoughts in mind, I was shocked to hear that there are those who wish to harm even the small percentage of funds allocated by the Claims Conference for Holocaust remembrance.

I am asking you, Dr. Singer, to do all you can to ensure and strengthen Holocaust remembrance, which today relies, to a great extent, on the support of the organization that you head. When you deliberate over the division of the funds entrusted to you, recall the last words of the owners of these funds - the victims of the Shoah - "remember and never forget!"

Warm regards,

S. Weiss

Prof. Szewach Weiss
Chairman, Yad Vashem Council
Israel Ambassador to Poland