

ELI ZBOROWSKI

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May 20, 2003

Mr. Julius Berman, Chairman
Dr. Israel Singer, President
Conference on Jewish Material Claims
Against Germany
15 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Berman and Dr. Singer:

There continues to be an ongoing discussion regarding the importance of Holocaust Education vs. the need to support aging Holocaust survivors.

I have already put my opinions in writing as evidenced by the enclosed article published in the *Boston Jewish Advocate* in March 2003.

The allocation of funds for research and teaching the history of the Holocaust is both a fulfillment of our obligation to remember the victims, and a necessity to learn the lessons of that tragic period. In doing so, we benefit the present and the future generations of the Jewish people. Teaching the lessons of the Holocaust is an assurance that such atrocities will not be repeated to the Jewish, or any other people.

Sincerely,



Eli Zborowski
Chairman

Enclosure
EZ:rg

Funding ensures Holocaust horrors won't be forgotten

By Eli Zborowski

A little more than 50 years ago, the late Dr. Nahum Goldmann was driven by a vision when he convened representatives of 23 major Jewish organizations and organized the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

At the time, all survivor organizations and many survivors were against dealing with the Germans. What Goldmann and his colleagues saw as a measure of justice to the survivors, we saw as blood money and fought against it.

Over the years, the Claims Conference pursued and expanded its mission, negotiated dozens of agreements, and secured more than \$50 billion in compensation for survivors.

As survivors are now aging, many are becoming more in need of physical and psychological assistance. Restitution funds are now being used, and must continue to be used, primarily to provide essential services such as home care, medical care, hunger relief, and social programs that bring comfort and companionship.

The Jewish survivors who walked away from the ashes of Nazi Europe knew they had the responsibility of being the voice of those who did not survive.

But 50 years from now, when there are no Holocaust survivors alive to tell their stories, how will we ensure that the world still learns of the Shoah and of the six million murdered Jews? It is the Jewish obligation of today to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust does not fade with the passing of the last survivor in years to come.

We can guarantee this legacy by supporting current efforts to assist researchers and develop educational programs, such as seminars for teachers and providing teaching materials. We can also educate future generations by supporting efforts to document, archive, and preserve irreplaceable documents, pictures, artifacts, and, of course, first-hand survivor accounts of the Holocaust.

In 1953, when the Knesset established Yad Vashem, the Heroes and Martyrs Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, the Claims Conference provided half the funding for the first building. The Claims Conference has been supporting it ever since.

Yad Vashem is the world's leading archive of Holocaust-related

materials. The resulting databases and archives have enabled survivors and heirs to learn of the fates of long lost family members, even decades later. Such troves of material were also extensively used by parties to Holocaust-related litigation that has led to recent compensation settlements for survivors, including the Swiss banks settlement and the German Foundation to compensate slave and forced laborers.

Surely most Holocaust survivors support both the ability of families to find victims' names and these important compensation settlements and payments. But neither might have come to pass without such research and documentation as supported by the Claims Conference.

Funds are also used to support Holocaust education. Programs that teach about the Shoah are our generation's legacy to the victims of the Holocaust. We pay tribute to their memory by ensuring that the world knows of their fate, and of the consequences of letting anti-Semitism and tyranny go unchallenged.

It is my firm belief that any survivor who needs social service assistance should receive it. Those who emerged from the camps, ghettos, forests, and hiding places have already endured more than any human being should. In their last years, Holocaust survivors are entitled to care and comfort, and it is the responsibility of the Jewish community to supplement the efforts already being made in this area with restitution funds.

But a small portion of restitution funds derived from the sale of unclaimed Jewish property in the former East Germany that support institutions devoted to Shoah education, research and documentation are also continuing the task of those survivors who carried the obligation to tell the world what had happened. These efforts must be continued in order that the legacy of the Holocaust may remain with the world long after the survivors — and the generation that learned from the survivors — are gone.

Eli Zborowski, who survived the Holocaust hiding in Poland, is a founder and chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem. He is also the founder and honorary president of the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates and Nazi Victims and vice president of the American Federation of Polish Jews.

Boston Jewish Advocate
3/21/03

Restitution – Past, Present and Future
by Eli Zborowski

A little over fifty years ago the late Dr. Nahum Goldman was driven by a vision when he convened representatives of 23 Major Jewish National and International Organizations and organized the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany.

All Survivors Organizations and many Survivors were against dealing with the Germans. What Dr. Goldman and his colleagues saw it as a measure of justice to the survivors, we saw it as Blood Money and fought against it.

Over the years the Claims Conference pursued and expanded its mission, negotiated dozens of agreements, secured for survivors more than \$50 Billion in compensation payments.

Now, we, the Survivors, learned to appreciate the wisdom of the late Dr. Nahum Goldman, followed by the late Dr. Israel Miller and now carried forward by the current leadership, including Holocaust Survivors, in their drive for material claims against Germany that began more than half a century ago.

As those survivors are now aging, many are becoming more in need of physical and psychological assistance. Restitution funds are now being used, and must continue to be used, primarily to provide essential services such as homecare, medical care, hunger relief, and social programs that bring comfort and companionship.

The Jewish survivors who walked away from the ashes of Nazi Europe knew they had the responsibility of being the voice of those who did not survive.

But 50 years from now, when there are no Holocaust survivors alive to tell their stories, how will we ensure that the world still learns of the Shoah and of the six million murdered Jews? It is the Jewish obligation of today to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust does not fade with the passing of the last survivor in years to come.

We can guarantee this legacy by supporting current efforts to assist researchers and to develop educational programs, such as seminars for teachers and providing teaching materials. We can also educate future generations by supporting efforts to document, archive, and preserve irreplaceable documents, pictures, artifacts, and of course first-hand survivor accounts of the Holocaust.

In 1953, when the Knesset – the Israeli Parliament -- established Yad Vashem, The Heroes and Martyrs Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) provided half the funding for the first building and has been supporting the National Jewish Memorial Institution ever since.

As a survivor, I am proud to have served as Chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem.

Yad Vashem is the world's leading archive of Holocaust-related materials. Its principal missions are commemoration, research and documentation; collection, examination and publication of testimonies to the Holocaust; the collection and memorialization of the names of Holocaust victims; and research.

The resulting databases and archives have enabled survivors and heirs to learn of the fates of mysteriously disappeared family members, even decades later. Such troves of material were also extensively used by parties to Holocaust-related litigation that has led to recent compensation settlements for survivors such as the Swiss Banks Settlement and the German Foundation to compensate slave and forced laborers.

Surely most Holocaust survivors support both the ability of families to find victims' names and these important compensation settlements and payments. But neither might have come to pass without such research and documentation as supported by the Claims Conference.

It is my firm belief that any survivor who needs social service assistance should receive it. Those who emerged from the camps, ghettos, forests, and hiding places have already endured more than any human being should. In their last years, Holocaust survivors are entitled to care and comfort, and it is the responsibility of the **Jewish Community** to supplement the efforts already being made in this area with restitution funds.

But a small portion of restitution funds derived from the sale of Jewish heirless property in the former East Germany that support institutions devoted to Shoah education, research and documentation are also continuing the task of those survivors who carried the obligation to tell the world what had happened. These efforts must be continued in order that the legacy of the Holocaust may remain with the world long after the survivors – and the generation that learned from the survivors – are gone.

Fifty years from now and for eternity, future generations will appreciate the Claims Conference assistance to research and education on Shoah, among them ensuring that the names of the six million are recorded for all time. Those who perished wished to be remembered; we must honor their last wish.

Eli Zborowski, who survived the Holocaust hiding in Poland, is a Founder and Chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem. He is also the Founder and Honorary President of the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates and Nazi Victims and Vice President of the American Federal of Polish Jews.