

ארגון עולי מרכז אירופה - ע"ר
IRGUN OLEJ MERKAS EUROPA

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פקס: 03-5164435

21 October 1999

Mr. Judah Gribetz
Richards & O'Neil, LLP
885 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022-4873


RE: Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation

Dear Mr. Gribetz,

Following my letter to you of August 15, 1999 and your kind reply of September 8, 1999, please find enclosed a detailed proposal submitted by our Organization .

We hope the enclosed submission will enable Judge Korman to make a favorable ruling on our behalf.

Sincerely,


Michael Koll Neshner
Chairman

Irgun Olei Merkas Europa
Organization of Immigrants from Central Europe

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**Caring for the Present &
Using the Legacy of the Past
To Better the Future**

Application
for
Allocation of Funds

October 1999

Synopsis

This is an application for an allocation of \$65.1 million from the Swiss Bank Settlement Fund, submitted by the *Irgun Olei Merkas Europa*, the *landsmanshaft* of German-speaking Jews in Israel.

Founded in 1932, the Organization is the largest body in Israel representing Jews from Central Europe--Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia, reaching 15-18,000 persons in the country's major urban centers. All these individuals are people who were affected--either directly or indirectly--by the behavior of the Swiss banks, wrongs which the present Settlement seeks to redress. As many of these deserving survivors from Central Europe are not in a position to substantiate their claims before the Swiss Banks, the Organization regards itself as their individual and collective representative and spokesperson; a body that will continue to care for this aging survivor population over the next ten years--while at the same time creating and enhancing venues for the expression of the collective impact of an immigrant group whose norms and values that can contribute to an examination and resolution of, present-day conflicts and dilemmas in Israel.

A not-for-profit institution, the Organization sustains and supports the aging German-Jewish population through a network of five Parent Homes, in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa--with a capacity of 1,000 residents, including 150 in nursing wards; three Sheltered Housing buildings for 160 completely independent persons; and four Senior Citizen Day Centers. The Organization also extends significant financial assistance to needy members.

Self-reliance has always been the motto of German-speaking Jews in Israel. Consequently, the Organization and its subsidiary, the *Solidaritaetswerk*, or Aid Society--a legally independent entity--rely heavily on voluntarism, to complement their modest professional staff. It is only in recent years--as the needs of its aging members have expanded considerably, and the purchasing power of their pensions dwindled; and as its Parent Homes and other facilities have also aged and deteriorated, that there is a pressing need to meet the rapidly spiraling demands, of heavy subsistence subsidies and the addition of modernized facilities. Funds from the Swiss Bank settlement, one that will ensure that these needs are met in the coming years.

Use of the Funds

The requested funds will have two major complementary uses: 1) The continued care of an aging German-speaking survivor population and their offspring; and 2) The preservation and dissemination of the rich legacy of German-speaking Jews in Israel, through a soon-to-be-constructed Heritage House and the Organization-affiliated Leo Baeck Institute. These two institutions serve as a bridge into the future will ensure that these Holocaust survivors are not forgotten. More than that, they will serve to enrich present and future generations in the State of Israel.

The House will perpetuate the memory and achievements of the Fifth *Aliya* (wave of immigration of German-speaking Jews) who came to Palestine in the 1930s. These not only found refuge in Israel. They had a critical impact in every sphere and on every level, from business to culture, from the economy, to academia, from medicine, to the law, from the media to politics. Through symposia, conferences, diverse cultural forums and public platforms, the House will highlight areas in which these immigrants have left a mark. Moreover, it will focus on the underlying values of democracy, humanism, liberalism and tolerance, which these immigrants brought with them. Given the present wide-ranging debate within Israeli society on its future identity, such a House can make a significant contribution to that debate.

Much of the intellectual underpinnings of the House and its program will be provided by the Organization's academic affiliate, the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem. A research institute of world-repute, it sponsors important academic research and publishes books and papers, on topics pertaining to the history of Jews in Germany and other German-speaking countries—political, social, cultural and economic; initiates exchanges between experts; holds academic conferences and symposia, featuring world renown scholars; and provides scholarships for students engaged in the academic study of issues pertaining to diverse aspects of the historiography of German Jewry.

The Leo Baeck Institute proposes to expand its scholarship fund significantly and open it up both to second and third generation Israeli students of German-speaking descent, as well as to those academically engaged in the above topics. In exchange for scholarships, recipients will connect to the residents of the Organization's diverse Parent Homes and Centers. They will give talks on their academic work and participate in communal tasks with Organization members.

Thus, the past and future shall be intertwined, through inter-generational human contact and the perpetuation of the legacy of this monumental group of refugees, for all times.

*...The busy noise of the hour must no longer drown out the vox humana.
This voice must not only be listened to,
it must be answered and led out of lonely monologue..”*

Martin Buber, Dialogue & Peace, 1952

I. German-speaking Jews in Israel: Background

Jewish Immigration from German-speaking Europe

At the beginning of 1933, there were 500,000 Jews in Germany, some one percent of the total population; another 200,000 lived in Austria. In the Final Solution, 60,000 Austrian Jews and 180,000 German Jews perished, i.e., about one third of the Jews in these two countries.

One out of every ten emigrated to Palestine - a total of between 50-60,000 Jews. They comprised 20 percent of the immigrants who arrived there during the Third Reich. During the two years preceding World War II, however, they accounted for half of all Jewish immigrants to Palestine.

Until 1933, the number of German, Austrian and Czech immigrants never exceeded 2,000, or less than two and a half percent of the annual Jewish immigration figure. In 1933, however, their numbers climbed to 25 percent, i.e., a ten-fold increase. The new arrivals boosted the Jewish rural population, from 45,000 in 1931, to 105,00 in 1939. In 1939, German-speaking Jews constituted approximately 27 percent of the *yishuv*, the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine. The Fifth *Aliya* (or ‘wave of immigration’) from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia, comprised 55,000. From 1933 to 1948, a total of 75,000 immigrants from Central Europe arrived in Palestine. In 1954, they numbered 90,000.

Impact of the Fifth Aliya

Although still a numerical minority, by virtue of culture, skills and capital imports, the German-speaking wave of immigrants, henceforth to be labeled the ‘Fifth *Aliya*,’ set a unique imprimatur on Palestine/Israel.

Economically, the Fifth *Aliya* was the most successful in the history of the *yishuv*. Committed, educated and relatively affluent, they managed to get back on their feet in Palestine. Approximately one quarter settled in villages; the Zionists among them opted for *kibbutzim*. Several thousand were brought to Palestine by Youth *Aliya*, a Jewish Agency program which rescued and brought to Palestine, children and youth whose parents had either been killed in the War, or who were, for some reason, unable to emigrate along with their children.

The most extensive impact of the Fifth *Aliya*, like that of the immigration waves of the early and mid 1920s, was in the development of larger Jewish urban centers. Tel Aviv and its suburbs absorbed not less than half the immigrants. Its metropolitan population grew from 46,000 at the end of 1931, to 135,000 in 1935. A similar process occurred in the other two major cities, Jerusalem and Haifa. Urban progress in these relatively large metropolises also reflected a dramatic infusion of German Jewish funds.

The Fifth *Aliya* generated personalities who played a major role in the establishment and development of Israel. Their influence was felt in business, culture, the economy, academia, medicine, the law, the media, and politics. Personalities such as world-renown philosopher and educator, Martin Buber; Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, famed psychologist Kurt Lewin; artist Hermann Struck; architect Alexander Baerwald; poet Else Lasker-Schuler and many many more.

The Jewish immigrants from German-speaking Europe brought with them notions and practices of liberal individualism, rather than socialist collectivism. Their demanding individualism coupled with their European ways, made them a seminal force. Members of this *aliya* understood that they had to give more of themselves than they could hope to receive from the absorbing society around them. Moreover, they became a major contributing force to Israel's integration into the world.

They helped change the face of the cities with the houses they designed and built, some in functional Bauhaus style, the latest word in architecture of that time. They established 51 kibbutzim and 18 settlements: Kfar Shmaryahu, Sdeh Warbug, Nahariya, Beit Yitzhak, to name only a few. They liberalized the kibbutzim they founded, like Ma'ayan Zvi, Dalia, Hazorea; and established a host of cooperative settlements in diverse locations in the country.

They were among the founders of the Tel Aviv stock exchange. They established the first private banks. Over 240 factories in their hands employed 4,020 persons and generated 19 percent of manufacturing in Eretz Yisrael (Stef Wertheimer; Yekutiel Federman; Mi. The immigrants made a lasting mark in establishing brand names that have become synonymous with the generic terms: Blue Band (margarine), Strauss (dairy products), Ata (textiles), Dan (hotels), and many more. They opened stores and businesses such as the *yishuv* had never seen, including several small department stores; European cafes sprang up everywhere, as did lectures and chamber music concerts. They introduced numerous dailies and weeklies into Palestine.

They were instrumental in establishing and maintaining the country's first institutions of higher education: The Technion - Institute of Technology in Haifa; and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

They established Bezalel, Israel's first and leading Fine Arts Academy and the Cameri Theater of Tel Aviv, Israel's theater of social responsibility. Under the leadership of violinist Stanislav Huberman, prominent German-speaking musicians founded the national Philharmonic Orchestra. The orchestra's creators inherently possessed the necessary characteristics to make it into an orchestra of world-repute: virtuosity, excellence and rejection of mediocrity. German-speaking Jewish immigrants also figured prominently among Israel's composers (Paul Ben-Haim - IP*; Yosef Tal - IP;

They made a major impact in the field of medicine, through numerous top-notch physicians (Prof. Herman Zondek) and the privatization of medicine, in a society marked by a high degree of nationalized institutions; and developed pharmaceutical

* Recipient of the Israel Prize, the country's highest recognition of achievement in a given field.

companies. They introduced psychiatry (Dr. Moshe Wallach). All in all, these immigrants helped elevate the medical care in Israel to one approaching that found in the US or in Europe.

The power of these German-speaking immigrants never expressed itself in collectivist frameworks--neither in politics, nor in economics, nor in the army. Real influence was wielded through a handful of outstanding individuals--in particular judges, including several supreme court justices (Dr. Moshe Semoira; Haim Cohn; Moshe Shapira; Gavriel Bach); newspaper publishers and editors (Zalman Schocken founder & publisher of the *Ha'aretz* independent liberal daily; Dr. Azriel Carlebach, editor of the afternoon daily, *Yediot Achronot*; veteran journalist, Uri Avneri), a few noteworthy parliament members and civil servants (Dr. Joseph Burg, among others, Minister of Interior; Pinchas Sapir, Minister of Finance; Gen. (res.) Shlomo Lahat, Mayor of Tel Aviv; Dr. Siegfried Moses & Yitzhak Neventsals, State Comptrollers), including ambassadors (Arthur Ben Natan, first Israeli Ambassador to Germany; Ambassador to France; Amb. Ehud Avriel, one of the heads of *Aliya Bet*, the illegal pre-State immigration organization; Gideon Raphael, Ambassador to the UN & to Great Britain; director-general of the Foreign Ministry); artists & writers (writers Arnold Zweig & Natan Zach; poet Yehuda Amichai - IP; sculptor Yigal Tomarkin; Miriam Karoli - sculptress & graphic artist; Margalit Orenstein - the first ballet studio; Gertrude Kraus - modern dance pioneer - winner of the Israel Prize; Anna Ticho - artist - winner of the Israel Prize; Margot Klausner, director of the Habimah Theater & founder of the Herzeliya Film Studios; actresses Hanna Meron & Orna Porat), architects (Yaacov Richter; Richard Kaufmann; Erich Mendelsohn; Alfred Mansfeld - IP); academics & scientists (Prof. Ernst David Bergman, founding father of Israel's nuclear project; Prof. S.D. Goiten, renown Geniza scholar; Leo Pucard, geology; Prof. Avraham Fraenkel, mathematics; Adolf Riefenberg, history; Prof. Franz Ullendorf - exact sciences - Israel Prize; Prof. Gershon Shaked, Hebrew Literature; Prof. Naftali Tur Sinai - founder, Israel Academy of the Hebrew Language winner of the Israel Prize; Prof. Ora Kedem -Physical Chemistry - winner of the Israel Prize; Prof. Dina Feitelsohn - education - winner of the Israel Prize; educators (Prof. Siegfried Lehman, founder of the Ben Shemen educational institution; Prof. Arieh Simon, founder of the Teachers' Seminar; Prof. Ernst Akiva Simon) bankers (Ernst Yaffe, chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank Leumi; Dr. Ernst Lehman, founder and first head of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and of Bank Leumi), businessmen (Stef Wertheimer, founder of Iskar; Reuven Hecht, founder of Dagon Silo); sports champions (swimmers Shoshana Riebner & Yehudit Deutsch-Hasefel; Zvi Ehrlich)), generals (Yoseph Geva, Rabbi Mordechai Piron, Avraham Mendler, Dan Laner, Eytan Avisar, Haim Ben David, Gen. Yisrael Baer) and Mossad operators (Joseph Hermelin & Avraham Shalom). They even had an influence in agriculture (Prof. Simon Fritz Bodenheimer, Prof. Hillel Oppenheimer - Israel Prize); and on the police force (Zippora Schick - first woman police commander).

The German-speaking immigrants stood out from all previous immigrants. They were more familiar with Western culture, than the rest of the *yishuv* and refused to disappear into the local society. They developed their own system of community work and mutual aid societies. They were equated with peace and quiet, order, good manners, punctuality, respect for parents and consideration for one's fellow men. But above all, they brought with them a humanistic openness and a struggle for quality of life.

As a group, they played an important part in shaping and molding the society, culture, and mentality of the emerging state. They gave a significant push to the battle over the ethical and ideological character of the State of Israel. In the conflict between the national insularity of Israeli Zionism and openness to world Jewry, most of the immigrants advocated openness and values of universal humanism. In the conflict between the values of religion and the values of secular liberalism, the majority were secularists. In the conflict between socialist collectivism and liberal individualism, the immigrants were among the liberals. In the conflict between the needs of the country and the rights of the individual, most supported the individual. In the conflict between get-the-job done improvisation and professional expertise, the immigrants were the professionals. In the conflict between insubordination and law and order, they sided with the law. In the conflict between violence, militarism extremism and hostility toward the Arabs and the readiness to make peace, the immigrants favored tolerance and compromise between Zionist & Palestinian Arab nationalism.

But the German-speaking Jewish immigrants to Palestine/Israel also suffered a great deal. Many professionals among them were forced to take menial jobs; doctors became bus drivers; academics became farmers, housewives became house maids. More difficult perhaps than a lowered standard of living or under-employment, was their complex identity and an enduring feeling of alienation for many, because of what they perceived as a seemingly unbridgeable cultural gap and a lack of sense of belonging.

II. Applying Organization

Irgun Olei Merkas Europa was established in 1932, by the leaders of the Fifth *Aliya*, with the aim of facilitating the absorption of Jewish immigrants from Central Europe, economically, socially and culturally.

The Organization is a not-for-profit body, that acts on behalf of Jews from Central Europe and their descendants, whose language and culture is German. As many of the deserving survivors from Central Europe are not in a position to substantiate their claims before the relevant European governments, banks and companies, the Organization regards itself as their individual and collective spokesperson--charged with representing its members and assisting them in obtaining reparations, filing claims pertaining to funds, property and other assets seized during the Holocaust years.

Throughout the years, the Organization's aims have not changed. Rather, they have taken on other shapes and assumed different priorities and emphases. In the past, its assistance was provided for emergency relief work, to meet the immediate existential needs of German-speaking immigrants, refugees forced to flee their native countries in Central Europe: basic funds, accommodations, emphasis on study of the Hebrew language, professional training or retraining, and diverse financial subsidies. While in recent years, the Organization's focus has shifted more heavily to the issue of accommodations and care, and the provision of a social and cultural life for an aging immigrant population.

The Organization has established a number of Parent Homes in each of Israel's major cities. It also runs Sheltered Housing buildings and Senior Citizen Day Centers in these locations.

Organizational activities reach between 15-18,000 persons. Contact with members is maintained through an Annual Convention and through the Organization Newsletter, *Mitteilungsblatt des Irgun Olei Merkas Europa*. Published 10 times a year, the Newsletter, is disseminated to members, supporters and volunteers. It provides organizational news, as well as feature articles on prominent German-speaking Jewish figures in Israel--past and present; book reviews; innovations, a la "Who's Afraid of the Computer"; current events, such as the virulent cancer of extreme right movements in the world; the need for religious pluralism in Israel; interviews with leading German-speaking jurists on religion and state, Judaism & democracy, etc.; synopses of relevant conferences and seminars; news about exhibitions and cultural events; and advice and letters from the membership.

In 1941, the Organization established the subsidiary **Aid Society (*Solidaritaetswerk*)**, run as an independent legal entity. At its inception, the Society aimed at raising the necessary financial resources to meet the pressing needs of German-speaking immigrants during the 1930s and into the 1940s. Acting as a social welfare agency, the Society now helps supports low-income Organization members. It supplements the funding of Parent Homes. Given that no resident of German-speaking origin who applies for eligibility in one of the Organization's Homes, is turned down because of financial limitations, the subsidies called for, are often significant.

The Society's social welfare departments are run by highly skilled professionals who provide individual as well as communal services. The Society also supports various Organization institutions and projects, including cultural and social events.

The Aid Society is funded by annual individual donations, contributions for special events, and funds bequeathed in wills and testaments of individuals who identify with the organization and its aims, from Israel, and from foundations and other funding sources abroad.

Voluntarism, Voluntarism, Voluntarism

Both the Organization and the Society rely heavily on voluntarism. Unlike many other immigrants to Israel, those of German-speaking origin have always believed in self-reliance and self-help. Hence, from its very inception, the Organization was self-sustaining. It is only in recent years, as its members have grown older, as the purchasing power of their pensions from abroad has dwindled considerably, and the needs of this aging population expanded, that the Organization has looked to external funding sources to complement the funds it raises from among its own members.

Voluntarism permeates the social and qualitative infrastructure of the entire organization. It has been its motto from the very start. A large cadre of dedicated and loyal volunteers complements the relatively small professional staff (a total of 40 employees, about 10 per branch). Over 250 volunteers are active in every aspect and program of the Organization: from central administration to branches and committees, from Day Centers to Parent Homes. Volunteers stimulate social events, run cultural evenings and also assist in the social welfare department.

The bulk of volunteers are aged 60 and over. Many are second generation, i.e., children of German-speaking immigrants. The average volunteer devotes between 25-30 hours a month. Where necessary, volunteers undergo training, given by professional facilitators, who provide their services on a pro-bono basis.

These highly devoted volunteers give not only of their time, but also express their commitment through annual monetary contributions, in which over 3,000 members take part.

The Organization would like to further augment its voluntary force, by recruiting students, some of them third and fourth generation. It is in the process of articulating a scholarship program, whereby students would receive scholarships, in exchange for community work, most particularly with the elderly residing in Parent Homes, or those participating in the Organization's Day Centers.

Organizational Make-Up, Operation & Facilities

Headquartered in Tel Aviv, the Organization also has branches in Jerusalem and Haifa. All branches provide assistance with social welfare problems. Social welfare activities are complemented by trips both within Israel and abroad, and cultural events, such as concerts, theater, films and lectures and trips. Tickets to diverse cultural events are often subsidized or discounted. Organization activities attract a significant number of members. A recent event at Kibbutz Ha'ogen, to cite but one example, was attended by over 750 people.

The Organization's governing Presidium is composed of 18 members. Each of the three branches elects delegates. These, in turn, elect the Presidium members at the Organization's Annual Convention. (For Organization Flow Chart, see Appendix A)

The Organization's annual budget stands at 58.7 million New Israeli Shekels (equivalent to \$13.8 million).

III. Organization Subsidies & Facilities for Aging Central European Jews: Background & Needs

"Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother..."

A. Existing Facilities

The Organization's diverse facilities allow for care of its members for life. Senior Citizens who are fully independent can choose between Sheltered Housing and Parent Homes. Once they become less independent or mobile, members can move into the nursing wards. To the degree that they are mobile, all can avail themselves--as can many other Organization members--of the diverse additional activities provided by the Day Centers (For more details on the Organization's institutions, its outlook and approach to care, see Appendix II).

1. Parent Homes

The Organization's five Homes are situated in Israel's three major cities: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem & Haifa. They comprise both apartment units for self-reliant independent residents, as well as nursing wards for mentally or physically dependent individuals. Currently, there are 1,000 residents in the Parent Homes. Of these, 150 are in nursing wards.

Currently, between 10 and 20 percent of Parent Home residents are subsidized by the Organization: 12 percent receive minimal subsidies; eight percent, larger amounts. (This is in addition to subsidies provided by the Organization for other needy members). These subsidies are rapidly increasing both in size and in scope, as more and more of this aging population turns to nursing wards.

B. Organization Needs: Expansion & Building

1. Purpose of Allocation

The Organization is applying for an allocation from the Swiss Bank Settlement Fund for:

- **Subsidies** for Organization members, most particularly for residents of the Organization's Parent Homes and Sheltered Housing Buildings.
- **A New Parent Home:** Pisgat Hayamim--a soon-to-be constructed Home in the planning, in Haifa.
- **A Heritage House** that will present to the public, the rich multi-layered legacy of German-speaking Jews in Israel.
- The affiliated prominent **Leo Baeck Research Institute** that provides the intellectual underpinning for Heritage House.
- **Scholarships** for third and fourth generation students of German-speaking descent, or those whose academic work touches upon the subject of German Jewry.

1. Subsidies for Needy Organization Members

As mentioned above, self-reliance has always been the motto of German-speaking Jews in Israel. Consequently, throughout its history, the Organization and its subsidiary, the *Solidaritaetswerk*, or Aid Society--a legally independent entity--relied on voluntarism and on the resources of its members. In recent years, however, as the needs of its aging members have expanded considerably, and the purchasing power of their pensions dwindled, demands by members for subsidies--especially by those residing in the Organization's Parent Homes--have spiraled. Increasingly, these will continue to grow as the gaps between ability to pay and growing dependence widens.

If these individuals are to live out the remainder of their lives in dignity, there is a pressing need for funds to cover these subsistence subsidies. The Organization assesses the number of needy individuals who either already require, or will need subsidies, at 500. It would like to be able to subsidize each of these persons, at an average of

\$6,000 a year. The Organization further anticipates that the need for these subsidies will extend over the next ten year period.

2. The Parent Homes

Four out of the five Parents Homes were constructed 40-45 years ago. These have since been expanded and reconstructed several times. There is, however, constant need to keep up with the growing demand for more modernized accommodations and additional beds. Equipment has to be replaced, furniture has to be renewed; computerized systems have to be introduced and maintained; safety devices, such as smoke detectors and fire alarms, call for constant upgrading.

Nursing wards and their specialized facilities have to be continually upgraded, so as to render them optimally functional, to meet the standards set by gerontology specialists, such as the Joint Distribution Committee's prestigious Brookdale Institute.* In order to be able to accommodate the residents of these nursing wards, at a level commensurate with the Organization's norms, occupancy has to be at a certain level (according to the Brookdale recommendations, 120); so as to balance the budget, while being able to afford the amenities and level of professional care which have been the Organization's trademark.

All Organization Homes, which as mentioned above, operate on a not-for-profit basis, are showing a deficit, despite the Organization's reputation for meticulous budget balancing and fiscal responsibility. The deficit results from the need to subsidize resident payments. Contributions collected by the *Soldaritaetwerk* cannot cover the entire amount required not only to meet these expenditures, but for the upkeep and continual upgrade of existing buildings and equipment, as well as the construction of new facilities. It is imperative that these needs be met, if the Organization is to ensure the continued physical and mental well-being of the residents of its diverse facilities.

• Pisgat Hayamim - A New Home in Haifa

There are currently 712 members of the Organization wait-listed for its two Parent Homes and two Sheltered Housing buildings in Haifa. The potential number of apartments in all four buildings is 450. But due to their age and the dire need for renovation, their optimal capacity cannot be fully exploited.

The Haifa Branch faces the following tasks:

1. Renovation and restoration (including rebuilding) of existing buildings;
2. Creation of a new building to meet the growing demands.

Construction of Pisgat Hayamim

In view of the great demand noted above, the Organization is in the process of adding another Home. The lot has already been purchased and the undertaking is in process.

The new Home, Pisgat Hayamim, will accommodate 120 self-reliant residents and three nursing wards, with a 108-bed capacity. Residents will comprise new applicants, as well as some currently residing in one of the Organization's older Homes.

The Home's public facilities will comprise: a lobby and elevators; a dining room; a fully-equipped library with computer facilities; a number of rooms for cultural events; and exercise and physiotherapy facilities, including perhaps a swimming pool.

3. The Heritage House: The Legacy of Central European Jews in Israel

"The goal of our cultural work must be to create a new Hebrew humanism that will derive not only from man's greatness, but also from his humility...one that will recognize and preserve man's relations with his fellow men, with the nation, and with mankind as a whole, so as to revive the past, as part of this rebirth, to open the present toward the future."

A German-speaking immigrant to Israel, 1935

The Organization is now in an accelerated process of conceptualizing a Heritage House, focusing on the rich multi-layered legacy of German-speaking Jews in Israel. The House is aimed at creating awareness of, and perpetuating, the values introduced by the Fifth *Aliya*; and developing appreciation of the pluralistic traditions of German-speaking countries such as Austria.

With the gradual disappearance of the German-speaking refugees in Israel, there is a need to transmit to future generations, both facts relating to their monumental contribution to the building of the State, as well as the humanistic values--of democracy and respect for the law and for people; secularism, liberalism, tolerance and compromise; a universalistic, as opposed to a particularistic narrow approach to problem-solving--which these immigrants brought with them and applied in diverse fields and areas of endeavor; values which their Jewish brethren coming from Eastern Europe or North Africa were lacking.

This is of particular importance and relevance at this point in time in Israel's history; a period in which Israeli society is grappling with the need to define itself from within. For years, Israel was defined from without by its Arab enemies. Now, as it moves toward peace with its neighbors, and as a new generation in Israel gradually takes up the reins of leadership, there is a wide-ranging discussion about the very nature and character of the country. During a period in which Israel's identity may be forged for generations to come, the evocation and inculcation of values, introduced into that country by Jews from Central Europe, is pivotal to Israel's march toward the 21st century; in its quest to become a sophisticated, cutting-edge society, not only in science and technology, but also in the quality of life it offers its citizens and in the very nature of its societal underpinnings.

Heritage House: Content & Message

To date, there is no parallel institution in Israel. While there are numerous memorials to those who perished in the Holocaust; and educational programs, forums and academic studies dealing with this population as it relates to the Holocaust--flourish, no existing institution has been focused on bringing to life, the history of this momentous *aliya* of German-speaking Jews.

The proposed Heritage House will not be a museum that captures and transmits, even if in an interesting way, the past. Rather, it will use the past and the values emerging from those who peopled it as a springboard, to generate interest in, and debate about, the very values, issues and institutions with which these individuals have come to be identified.

Heritage House will link itself to a number of academic institutions and other relevant bodies, so as to make effective use of existing human and material resources. It will have an impact, for example, in developing curriculum on the study of "good citizenship." It may establish chairs in a number of institutions of higher education, for the study of diverse aspects of the Fifth *Aliya*, deemed to be of public interest, or of societal use.

Thousands of school children will come with their classes for visits revolving around specific themes they are studying within their formal educational system. Teachers will be able to turn to the House for advice and resources on curricular and extra-curricular topics of relevance, as well as for suggestions for subjects to present in their civics, or homeroom classes.

Heritage House will also use its premises for discussions with individuals and groups that share its worldview and social perceptions and beliefs: good citizenship, safeguarding the environment, quality of government and the like.

As noted at length in the introduction, German-speaking Jews have made a disproportionate contribution to numerous fields of endeavor in Israel. Some of the founding fathers who played a fundamental role in laying the foundations for institutions central to Israel's development, are still alive; others live on through their institutions and their children. It is vital that the testimonies and memories of the original immigrants be tapped and video-taped before that generation disappears.

These immigrants, who had such a powerful impact on the country, drew their roots and inspiration from noted German-speaking Jewish figures such as Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm, Alfred Adler, Arthur Schnabel, Arnold Schoenberg, Gustav Mahler, Arthur Schnitzler, Hannah Arendt, Simon Wiesenthal, Paul Ehrlich, Heinrich Heine, Franz Kafka, Max Lieberman, Max Brod, Stefan Zweig, Leon Feuchtwanger, and others who had a profound universal effect--each in his respective field--not only on their own generation, but on generations to come. They, too, will be "brought" into the House.

(For details of additional programs and activities proposed for Heritage House, see Appendix III.)

Heritage House: Program Needs

The Organization seeks to secure the Heritage House activities and programs (described above and in Appendix III) through an Endowment Fund.

Heritage House: Needs for Physical Premises

Given the importance of the project, the Municipality of Ramat Gan, a city adjacent to Tel Aviv, has granted the Organization a prime piece of land for the construction of the House.*

The Organization plans to construct a building 1,200 square meters in size. The building will house a state-of-the-art fully computerized library; exhibition rooms; an auditorium, equipped with the latest multi-media facilities; and reading and meeting rooms.

4. The Leo Baeck Institute

A research institute of world-repute, the Institute sponsors important academic research and produces books and papers, on topics pertaining to the history--political, social, cultural and economic--of Jews in Germany and other German-speaking countries.

Established in 1955, it is named after Rabbi Leo Baeck, the last representative of German Jewry and its prominent leader before and during the Holocaust. Its aim: to preserve the memory and spiritual values introduced by the German-speaking Jewish community and to pass on that community's cultural heritage, to future generations.

The Institute does so through sponsorship of high-level academic research. It also

* Area 6143, Lot 735 and part of Lot 741, decreed at the Ramat Gan Municipality Directors' Meeting, 5 August, 1999.

translates seminal works by leading thinkers, such as Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and others; and renews collections of historical documents and republishes works and memoirs by leading thinkers who perished in the Holocaust, or whose work was interrupted by the Holocaust.

Authors published by the Institute include: Prof. Gershom Scholem, famed Kabbalah scholar; Prof. Hugo Bergmann; and scores of others. Only recently, an international team of historians from the US, Europe and Israel--headed by Prof. Michael Meyer--the Institute's International President--completed four volumes depicting the history of Central European Jewry, from the mid 17th century to 1945. The work has been published in three languages.

The Institute also hosts academic lectures, conferences and symposia of experts. Participants in these have included: Prof. Robert Wistrich ("Karl Marx and the Jewish Question"); Prof. George Mosse ("The German Jewish Intellectual Experience"); and Prof. Saul Friedlander ("German Jewry under Nationalism").

It also holds joint seminars for Israeli and German historians, on diverse issues of mutual interest.

Leo Baeck Institute: Needs for Physical Premises

The Institute's facilities are currently situated in a two-and-a-half room apartment, with a 60 square meter library in an adjacent flat. The library's cramped quarters cannot do justice to the 25,000 volumes it houses; not to speak of the scores of publications, manuscripts and other authentic documents in its possession. Furthermore, the limited space does not allow students and scholars to pursue their research in comfort. And the Institute's location in a peripheral, run-down Jerusalem neighborhood, rather than a more central location in that city, precludes its optimal use.

The Institute would like to obtain larger premises, more suited to its purposes, situated in a more readily accessible location.

The new facilities will span a total of 380 square meters and include:

- A 150 square meter Auditorium, seating 100
- A 100 square meter library, with 50 square meters to house archival materials
- Offices and amenities (kitchen, rest rooms, storage area), totaling 130 square meters.

Leo Baeck Program

The Institute seeks to secure its publishing and conference/seminar program by means of an Endowment Fund.

Leo Baeck Scholarships

The Institute has had a tradition of disbursing scholarships to students engaged in academic research on issues within the Institute's purview. In cooperation with *Irgun Olei Merkas Europa*, it seeks to expand both the scope and magnitude of these scholarships, to include second and third generation students of German-speaking descent, regardless of their area of study.

Scholarship recipients will be linked with members of the Organization, either through communal work, or by enlisting in a special Organization Lecture Bureau that will send these young people to the Organization's diverse clubs and facilities, where they will make popularized presentations of their academic work.

IV. FUND ALLOCATION REQUESTED: SUMMARY*

The funding requested is of three types:

1. Annual allocations over 10 years;
2. Outright funds;
3. Endowment Funds.

A. Individual Subsidies, particularly for Parent Home Residents & Construction of a New Home

• Subsidies

Need: Subsistence subsidies, for Organization members-- most particularly residents of its Parents Homes and Sheltered Housing.

Estimated Cost: An annual average of \$6,000 per person for 500 persons = \$3 million per year.

Funds requested: \$3 million for ten years: \$30 million

• Construction of the new Pisgat Hayamim Parent Home, Haifa

Need: A new Parent Home, Pisgat Hayamim, that will accommodate 120 self-reliant residents and three nursing wards with a 108-bed capacity.

Estimated Building Cost: \$15.3 million.

Funds requested: \$5.1 million

*Heritage House - Construction, Maintenance & Program

Need: Construction and basic equipping of a building 1,200 square meters in size, in a prime location in Ramat Gan; building maintenance; ongoing program.

1. Construction

Estimated Cost: \$6.6 million.

Funds Requested: \$2.2 million

2. Building Maintenance & Program

Estimated Cost: \$800,000 annually.

Funds Requested: Endowment Fund of \$16 million (yielding 5% annually).

* Detailed budget breakdown of each project available upon request.

C. Leo Baeck Institute

Need: New premises, 380 square meters in size, comprising a specialized Library/Archives for graduate students and scholars; A 100-seat Auditorium; offices and basic amenities; Building maintenance; ongoing Institute program; student scholarships.

1. New Premises

Estimated Cost: \$1.8 million

Funds Requested: \$1.8 million

2. Ongoing Program & Student Scholarships

Estimated Cost: \$500,000 a year

Funds Requested: Endowment Fund of \$10 million (yielding 5% annually).

**Total allocation requested from
the Swiss Bank Settlement Fund:**

\$65.1 million

APPENDIX II

A. Organization Orientation & Approach to Parent Homes

The Organization's approach is a far throw from that of old-age and nursing homes run as businesses on a profit basis. Its attitude and values filter through and are reflected in the professional personnel running these institutions. Professionals who see their role in a very narrow sense and are missing the human touch, would not feel comfortable in the Organization's settings as they are today.

While the Organization has expanded and modernized its Homes, it has continued to emphasize personal attention and caring, not only physical enhancement. Parent Homes are built with attention to their surroundings. Greenery, trees and lawns peek out from every window. These homes are exactly that, "homes," not institutions. This is evident at all levels, from the attitude of the directors running them, to the quality and level of the home-made food served; to the immaculate standard of cleanliness; to involving occupants in the operation of the Homes and in determining their social and cultural life, as well as in tending to, and visiting, nursing ward residents who are less mobile or independent.

Much as in medicine, and other fields, where specialization is becoming increasingly narrower (so that even after ten specialists have examined a patient, often no doctor has really seen the person), in homes for the aged, there is a difficult dilemma of how to enhance and upgrade physical facilities, bring in highly specialized younger professionals and yet, not lose the human touch; how to maintain the level of total care and caring, rather than a clinical specialized approach. The Organization is deeply aware of this problem. And while it constantly seeks to modernize and ameliorate its facilities and expand activities within these, it tries to ensure that this not be done at the expense of success in penetrating the core of loneliness of old age.

However, if it is to continue to provide care and services at the same level and still compete, in terms of cost, with other institutions--that may look similar on the outside, but do not begin to measure up to the level and depth of care provided on the inside--the Organization must be able to expand its facilities and the number of residents in these, so that the income generated will keep it in the black and allow it to uphold the long-standing high standards for which it is known.

Thus, the Organization seeks to build new houses, expand, renovate and modernize existing ones, so as to render them more attractive. Even if its Homes are more attractive than those run by profit-making bodies, because of the quality of care, superior services and life with people of similar origin, certain standards of building and modern facilities have to be upheld--as these are a significant factor in dictating people's choices these days.

B. Sheltered Housing

The Organization provides an option of Sheltered Housing buildings for individuals who are totally independent and do not require dining and other services. The 160 or

so residents in these buildings have a once-a-week maid service, access to dining facilities for the major meal, medical facilities; and can take part in courses, workshops, dance therapy classes, cultural and social events in the building. The ages of the tenants vary from 70-85.

C. Day Centers

Day Centers provide a "home away from home" to senior citizens, for several hours a day, where they can socialize and participate in cultural activities, along with like-minded individuals of similar origin and language. Center users are generally 70 to 90 years of age.

The four Day Centers in the three major cities--Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa--serve to draw people out of their loneliness. These frameworks provide varied activities of interest, in a familial atmosphere, with people of similar background, who feel a sense of comfort with each other. In essence, they serve the function of an extended family, both for elderly persons who have children, as well as for those who are on their own.

People can come to this "second home" for several hours at a time. Some come for social reasons. Others pursue specific activities a few times a week. All report that what brings them to these centers, rather than to similar institutions run by other organizations, is the very personalized attitude of the individuals running the Centers and the volunteers, as well as the people they befriend there; people with whom they identify and feel a sense of familiarity and camaraderie; with whom, despite many years in the country, they can revert back to communicating in their mother tongue, German.

Center users pay a nominal fee for daily use of facilities, with an additional low fee for participation in social events and cultural activities. The Centers provide group trips and excursions, as well as courses on a variety of topics, ranging from art and ceramics, to bridge and scrabble, to Bible, languages, physical exercises and physiotherapy. They also host fashion shows, celebrate holidays, birthdays and offer a variety of lectures. The lectures--delivered by major Israeli personalities, including Knesset members, leading academics, prominent media figures and business people--focus on both basic and historic issues, as well as on current events.

Centers cater predominantly to individuals who are independent. But they never close their doors to senior citizens, mentally crippled or physically handicapped by old age, even if these require a great deal of attention and special care. All are made to feel special.

APPENDIX III.

Heritage House: Additional Program Components

In addition to the above-mentioned programmatic elements, further elements that might be included in the House:

- **A Library** of volumes by and about German-speaking Jews in Israel, with periodicals and publications on issues of concern to the House, including an **Oral History Library**;
- **Computer data banks** and materials in which users can get information on topics such as:
 - German-speaking Jewish immigrant doctors and their influence on the development of medicine in Israel;
 - German-speaking Jewish immigrant legalists and their impact on the development of Israel's legal system;
 - German-speaking Jewish architects and their effect on the country's structural landscape;
 - The introduction of liberalism into the printed media;
 - The introduction of professionalism into all areas of endeavor;
- **Display of original manuscripts, photos etc.**, such as:
 - The correspondence between Sigmund Freud & Arnold Zweig;
 - A pictorial history of the German-speaking Immigrants' Association;
 - Architectural blueprints of famous buildings in Israel;
 - The War of Languages (German vs. Hebrew) at the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology;
- **Lecture series and public panel discussions** on questions and problems faced 60 years ago, which are still under discussion in Israel today--albeit in a different form--basic issues, as well as current events. These might include topics such as:
 - Life for the German-speaking immigrant intelligentsia in the early years - similarities with that of the recent Soviet Jewish immigrant intelligentsia;
 - Walking the line between economic inferiority and cultural superiority;
 - Questions pertaining to immigrant-veteran relations, still very pertinent in this immigrant-absorbing society, such as the necessary adjustments of all sides to immigrants and what they can offer the absorbing society;
 - German-speaking immigrants as ambassadors of European culture in Israel; or the question of cultural longing;
 - Tolerance and openness to the "other"; compromise and co-existence as a way of life; use of the "we" and "you," when speaking about veteran Israelis and new immigrants, or Sephardim and Ashkenazim, or orthodox and secular (pronouns used by Ben Gurion, when he referred to "we," i.e., from Eastern Europe--the better Zionists and "you," i.e., the German immigrants...)
 - The individual and authority;
 - The critical role of the media in an open democratic society;
 - Diversity and pluralism: How diverse groups can maintain their cultural or religious identity and heritage, while at the same time being equal citizens and an integral part of society;
 - Legal anchors to ensure individual liberties and entitlements and to secure group rights: discussion of diverse models of legal anchors--including a constitution--that

can serve to cement individual liberties and group rights. Problems and prospects inherent in these safeguards;

--The role of government, the private sector and NGO's in social betterment and economic development;

- A proactive **Lecture Bureau** that will provide speakers and commentators--on the broad range of topics of interest to the House--to the media, community centers, formal and informal educational frameworks, and the like;
- **Plays and film series** on themes within the House's purview and panel discussions of plays, films and books, in Israel and abroad, on themes of relevance;
- **Art exhibitions and musical performances** by and/or for German-speakers.