



ASOCIACION FILANTROPICA ISRAELITA

Entidad sin Fines de Lucro

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<http://www.a-f-i.com>

Presidencia

Buenos Aires, March 8, 2000

**Mr. Judah Gribitz
Richards & O'Neil
885 Third Ave.
7th Floor New York, N.Y. 10022-4873
Fax 212 7509022
U.S.A.**

Re: Application for a Grant from the Swiss Bank Litigation Fund

Dear Mr. Gribitz,

We address ourselves to you by indication of Mr. Greg Schneider from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany Inc., New York.

Our institution, Asociación Filantrópica Israelita, (AFI), was established in 1933 with the mission of assisting and giving shelter to Jewish Nazi victims who - fleeing from the Nazi terror in Central Europe, mainly from Germany - seeked refuge in our country.

AFI takes care and provides shelter to a great number of elderly Jews, victims of Nazi Persecution. We believe that we are one of the organizations in the world entitled to receive substantial support from undistributed funds of the Swiss Bank Litigation Fund.

In 1933 our Asociación Filantrópica Israelita (at that time "Hilfsverein deutschsprechender Juden") had the purpose to save from the Nazi terror as many of our people as possible, assisting the new immigrants in their new home land, finding them places where to live, get jobs for them, taking care of their children by founding our "Kinderheim" (nowadays BETEINU). In 1940 our Parents' Home HOGAR ADOLFO HIRSCH was founded in order to assist and shelter elderly people, offering them a place where to spend the last years of their life in dignity and peace. We now give shelter to nearly 200 elderly refugees - mostly German Jewish Nazi victims. We still have some concentration camp survivors living in our home.

The average age of our inhabitants is 87 years. Our Home is considered to be one of the best of the Southern Hemisphere.

Contrary to what happens practically all over the world, here in Argentina, the needs of the victims of the Holocaust are taken care by only one organization, namely by the **ASOCIACION FILANTROPICA ISRAELITA**.

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We have received support through the Claims Conference in the past, which has allowed us, time and again, to considerably improve our Home and consequently the quality of life of our proteges. However, we believe that the amounts allotted to us never were in proportion to the size of the immigration to Argentina of Jews, victims of Nazi terror.

Over the last years, by the passing away of the generation with substantially higher reparations our income decreased greatly, producing continuous deficits. At present only 30% of our residents can fully contribute to their costs, while 30% can only contribute partially to it, and the remaining 40% have no economic means at all.

It may be remarked that the situation of our Kehilla changed dramatically after the AMIA bombing two years ago, avoiding any financial help from Jewish Institutions, foundations, and other potential sources of assistance.

The decrease of our income sources is mainly due to the following reasons:

- Most of our proteges are receiving only a very small Argentine social rent (USD 140.-). We cannot expect an increase in local pensions. (You may be aware, that Argentine pensionholders are the strongest hit sector of our economy).
- The pensions, which some of our inhabitants are receiving now from Germany and Austria, have been and are, for many years now, far below their maintenance cost.
- At this point it should be reminded that Argentina is by far the most expensive country in Latin America and our cost standards are similar to the European ones, yet our incomes are substantially less.
- The number of our members (membership \$ 40.- per month) is decreasing constantly. From the old days' level of 3000 members (in the 60's), at present we scarcely register 800. While elder members pass away, it is extremely difficult to enroll new ones, because the younger generation - born in Argentina - is not sufficiently motivated with the history of the Holocaust.

In 1990 we started with strong cost reduction measures, for example, personnel rationalization, cut-off of services which may be regarded as non-essential, etc. For moral, ethical and medical considerations and we cannot further reduce our services, also considering that our elderly protected residents have suffered so much during their lives that they have now a right to wellbeing. Consequently, we should, at least try to grant them wellbeing, peace and spiritual gratification during their last years, in order to allow them to somehow deal with their hard destinies.

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The medical care required is also very important in view of the high deterioration degree suffered by an ever increasing portion of our population. As life is extended by modern medical care more and more deterioration appears.

We calculate that we have assisted, without receiving any payment whatsoever, approximately 1.500 victims during the 66 years of our existence. These victims have lived at our Old Age home in San Miguel during an average of 5 years and have received financial and most varied social support. Just as an indication may we point out that at today's maintenance costs this has represented a financial burden for AFI of approx. 180 Million US, at the present cost of US 2.500.- per person/month). Furthermore we have provided social assistance through various means to more than 12.000 persons (mostly needy and unprotected individuals requiring financial, medical and social help), during our whole existence.

We hereby formally apply for support from the Swiss Bank Litigation Fund. We are at your entire disposition to offer you all the necessary information you may need to allow us the granting of the requested support.

We need help, in order to help.

Our history moves us to present this request.

Our huge and uninterrupted efforts justify our today's claim.

We await your response.

Cordially yours,

ASOCIACION FILANTROPICA ISRAELITA

Ing. Ricardo Vogelbaum
1^{er} Vicepresidente

Ing. José Smilg
President

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