



## B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

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August 7, 1991

Mr. Jonathan Kamens  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Kamens:

Please forgive the long delay in responding to your letter of June 17.

Computers are wonderful, but they also have the capacity to store and distribute erroneous information indefinitely.

The incident you refer to took place almost three years ago. A direct mail organization we employ was asked to produce and mail a fundraising appeal. Their proposed letter passed through our internal approval process even though it contained a sentence which might be construed as racist. A few thousand of the letters had been mailed (primarily to California residents) when a recipient called us to inquire about the language. We re-examined the letter, agreed that it could be misunderstood, and immediately withdrew and destroyed the remainder (most) of the mailing. We obtained a list of the people who had received the original, and wrote to each of them, explaining what had happened and voicing our regret. We did not fire the direct mail firm. We did not issue a public apology. We did examine and change our internal review procedures.

A mistake had been made, and we acted promptly and responsibly to correct it.

Unfortunately, a copy of the letter fell into the hands of an American Arab organization who decided to make a cause celebre of it. They held press conferences, demanded an apology, and sent letters to their rather extensive mailing list of individuals and organizations. They neglected to say that the original letter had reached few people and had been withdrawn and destroyed. In consequence, we received a number of indignant calls and letters; I must say, however, that after being apprised of the facts many of the callers and writers had the good grace to call or write again with apologies of their own.

The irony is that the American Arab organization undoubtedly gave much wider circulation to the letter than we had. And now, it seems, computer networks continue to give life to the overblown and self-serving reaction to a minor incident.

Continued . . .



Mr. Jonathan Kamens  
August 7, 1991  
Page 2

The idea that B'nai B'rith, which has opposed racism and the defamation of all people for 148 years, would knowingly or willingly promulgate a racist sentiment, is simply wrong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Arthur Shulman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Arthur Shulman  
Director of Communications

AS/le