

Edgar M. Bronfman

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August 25, 2004

Dear Senator:

I have been reading your efforts as a member of the United States Senate to address some of the open but extremely important issues in the arena of restitution for living victims of the Holocaust and their heirs. In particular, I am aware, as was reported in the recent edition of *The National Journal*, that you have taken on a leadership role in seeking a fair and rapid settlement of the Hungarian Gold Train matter.

As you know, I had the privilege of serving as the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States ("PCHA") from its inception in 1998 through its conclusion in December 2000.

PCHA was established by act of Congress (P.L. 105-186) in 1998. The enabling legislation directed PCHA to "conduct a thorough study and develop a historical record of the collection and disposition of the assets" taken from victims of the Holocaust by Nazi Germany or by the governments it controlled, "if such assets came into the possession or control of the Federal Government" at any time after January 30, 1933. As part of its task, PCHA was directed to file such interim reports with the President as it deemed appropriate, and to submit a final report to the President containing any recommendations for legislative, administrative or other actions it deemed necessary or appropriate.

Pursuant to its Congressional mandate PCHA issued one such interim report on October 14, 1999, the Progress Report On: The Mystery Of The Hungarian Gold Train ("Progress Report"). The Progress Report is a comprehensive and in-depth historical analysis of the Gold Train story and is, in my view, an accurate account of the United States' handling and disposition of the "Gold Train" property. Tragically, that report made public the long-concealed facts that the United States mishandled the Hungarians' property and disposed of it in violation of our laws, a blemish on an otherwise magnificent record at that time.

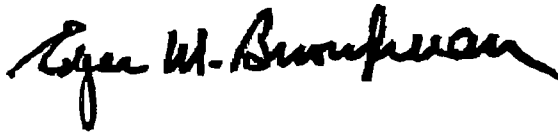
When I learned that the Department of Justice has criticized the Progress Report, and attempted to minimize its significance in the current Federal court litigation, I wanted to contact you about this urgent matter and state my position as the former PCHA Chairman.

Page Two
August 25, 2004

In December 2000 PCHA issued its final report, as required by P.L. 105-186. This report, **Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets ("Plunder and Restitution")**, did not repeat all the findings of the Progress Report. There was no need to repeat all of the specific findings because they had already been made public and remained available. Rather the findings were summarized along with many others in the final report. In no way, however, did PCHA intend to retract or retreat from the findings of the Progress Report. In fact, for years the Progress Report remained prominently displayed on PCHA's web site and it remains there today at <http://www.holocaustassets.gov/>.

I hope this clarifies the historical record and addresses any questions your colleagues may have on this point.

Yours sincerely,



Edgar M. Bronfman

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