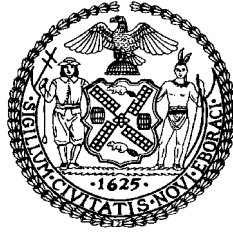


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THE COUNCIL



REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

Catherine Torres, Director and Deputy Chief of Staff

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

José M. Serrano – Chairperson

March 3, 2004

RES. NO. 177:

By Council Members Yassky, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Jackson, Koppell, Nelson, Sanders, Weprin and Gerson

SUBJECT:

Resolution supporting Hungarian Holocaust survivors as they seek justice from the United States government for its mishandling of the “Gold Train;” and further urging the United States Department of Justice to stop resisting these elderly survivors, and instead to promptly reach a fair settlement with them as a modest and overdue measure of justice.

On Wednesday, March 3, 2004, the City Council’s Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, chaired by Council Member José M. Serrano, will conduct a hearing to consider Resolution No. 177. A copy of the resolution is attached.

Resolution No. 177 would support Hungarian Holocaust survivors as they seek justice from the United States government for its mishandling of the “Gold Train.” The resolution would also urge the United States Department of Justice to stop resisting the elderly survivors and instead to promptly reach a fair settlement with them as a modest and overdue measure of justice.

Resolution No. 177 would state that the Nazi persecution of the Jews of Hungary, achieved in just a few months in 1944, was among the most brutal chapters in human history. The resolution would note that the Nazis systematically stole valuable and emotionally priceless personal property from the Hungarian Jewish community - property that was loaded onto a train that would eventually become known as the “Gold Train” and shipped west for plunder.

Resolution No. 177 would also note that upon the end of World War II, the United States Army accepted possession of the “Gold Train” and its contents. The resolution would observe that despite promising to return the property to the Holocaust survivors who were its rightful owners, the United States government instead allowed the property to be misappropriated and sold at auction.

Resolution No. 177 would point out that the United States government misled these Holocaust survivors about what had happened to the contents of the “Gold Train” for decades, forcing them to build new lives from scratch without their family possessions. The resolution would also point out that these survivors – many of whom live in New York City – are now seeking justice, the full truth and compensation for their property from the United States government. Finally, Resolution No. 177 would note that instead of working with these elderly survivors, the U.S. Department of Justice has insisted on fighting them in court, claiming immunity and seeking to delay their case.

..Title

Resolution supporting Hungarian Holocaust survivors as they seek justice from the United States government for its mishandling of the “Gold Train;” and further urging the United States Department of Justice to stop resisting these elderly survivors, and instead to promptly reach a fair settlement with them as a modest and overdue measure of justice.

..Body

By Council Members Yassky, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Jackson, Koppell, Nelson, Sanders, Weprin and Gerson

Whereas, The Nazi persecution of the Jews of Hungary, achieved in just a few months in 1944, was among the most brutal chapters in human history; and

Whereas, The Nazis systematically stole valuable and emotionally priceless personal property from the Hungarian Jewish community - property that was loaded onto a train that would eventually become known as the “Gold Train” and shipped west for plunder; and

Whereas, Upon the end of World War II, the United States Army accepted possession of the “Gold Train” and its contents; and

Whereas, Despite promising to return the property to the Holocaust survivors who were its rightful owners, the United States government instead allowed the property to be misappropriated and sold at auction; and

Whereas, The United States government misled these Holocaust survivors about what had happened to the contents of the “Gold Train” for decades, forcing them to build new lives from scratch without their family possessions; and

Whereas, These survivors – many of whom live in New York City – are now seeking justice, the full truth and compensation for their property from the United States government; and

Whereas, Instead of working with these elderly survivors, the U.S. Department of Justice has insisted on fighting them in court, claiming immunity and seeking to delay their case; now,

therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the Hungarian Holocaust survivors as they seek justice from the United States government for its mishandling of the “Gold Train;” and, be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the United States Department of Justice to stop resisting these elderly survivors, and instead to promptly reach a fair settlement with them as a modest and overdue measure of justice.