



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1030-1999, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1030

Resolution calling upon Allianz, BASF, Bayer, BMW, Commerzbank, DaimlerChrysler, Degussa-Huels, Deutsche Bank, Henkel, Hoechst, Mannesmann, Siemens, ThyssenKrupp, Veba, Viag, Volkswagen and the many other companies who utilized slave and forced labor in its factories during World War II to compensate such survivors with an amount commensurate to the pain and suffering endured by them.

By the Speaker (Council Member Vallone) and Council Members Rivera, Dear, Freed, Koslowitz, Lopez, Nelson, Perkins, Reed, Abel and Stabile; also Council Members Fisher, Harrison, Leffler, McCaffrey, Michels, O'Donovan, Povman and Quinn.

Whereas, The Nazi government "leased" tens of thousands of concentration camp prisoners as slave laborers to various foreign and domestic companies operating in Germany during World War II and these companies forced these laborers to work long arduous hours under inhumane conditions; and

Whereas, Evidence demonstrates that Daimler-Benz utilized slave labor in their factories, including facilities manufacturing motor vehicles and tanks for the Nazi Army, throughout occupied Europe; nearly 80% of the 100,000 slave laborers working at ThyssenKrupp died due to the inhumane working conditions; and

Whereas, Several lawsuits have been filed in U.S. federal courts by survivors of the Holocaust against Allianz, BMW, DaimlerChrysler, Siemens and other companies shown to have utilized slave labor; and

Whereas, In a recent trip to Berlin, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak expressed the need for a prompt resolution, stating "We are already more than 50 years after the end of the war. It's urgent since the people involved are very old already,"; and

Whereas, Officials from the United States, Germany, Israel, Russia, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, representatives of major German companies and victims' lawyers convened in Washington on October 6 and 7, 1999 to discuss a compensation figure for slave laborers; and

Whereas, The German negotiating team, representing 35 major companies and the German government, offered \$3.3 billion to settle the claims brought by slave and forced labor survivors. An estimated \$1.2 billion would be distributed to slave laborers (approximately \$5,495 per person) and \$1.1 billion would be given to forced laborers; and

Whereas, Several organizations have criticized the offer as being insufficient to redress the hardship and pain suffered by the survivors. Indeed, Mel Urbach, the general counsel of the World Council of Orthodox Jewish Communities stated, "They've come forth with an offer shameful to the legacy of Holocaust survivors and victims,"; and

Whereas, There may be close to 2.3 million survivors who could have claims against various companies that made use of forced labor under the Nazi regime and the sixteen companies mentioned above had a combined 1998 revenue of more than \$700 billion; and

Whereas, The compensation negotiations are due to reconvene in Bonn, Germany on November 16, 1999; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Allianz, BASF, Bayer, BMW, Commerzbank, DaimlerChrysler, Degussa-Huels, Deutsche Bank, Henkel, Hoechst, Mannesmann, Siemens, ThyssenKrupp, Veba, Viag, Volkswagen and the many other companies who utilized slave and forced labor in its factories during World War II to compensate such survivors with an amount commensurate to the pain and suffering endured by them.

ADOPTED

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