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Memorandum Concerning Aid for the Victims of the "Reichsbahn" Crimes

September 8, 2010

- In the autumn of 2009, the German citizens' initiative "Train of Commemoration" (ToC) published an expertise estimating the amount of the receipts made by the "Deutsche Reichsbahn" in the course of its complicity in the Nazi crimes against humanity to attain at least 445 million Euros. This amount of revenue, which has never been reimbursed, would, with interests, acquire at least 2.2 billion Euros.
- In the spring of 2010, based on this expertise, victims associations in Eastern Europe and the ToC recommended that the heirs of the "Reichsbahn" atone for those crimes through embursing the impoverished survivors of the "Reichsbahn's" deportations.
- In June 2010, with the participation of the German government, the Deutsche Bahn AG's board of directors entered talks with representatives of Eastern European victims. The negotiating partners intend to present a preliminary result of their several meetings in the near future.

According to information at our disposal, the victims have received a financial proposal from the Deutsche Bahn AG board of directors that is in no relationship to the minimal sum determined by the expertise (445 million Euros). The sum being proposed is inadequate and an affront to the victims, whose social situation compels them to accept. The proposal has created uproar among those concerned. It is destined to provoke indignation throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

Even a moderately enhanced proposal, that does not take into account the sum of reference for the criminally obtained "Reichsbahn" receipts (445 million Euros) and undercuts it by more than half, will not be able to be sustained.

A just result can only be obtained if the moral and financial aspects are comprehensively as well as consensually honored by all participants. So far, the procedure, which we consider a failure, has provided no basis for this to take place.

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"Reichsbahn" Crimes**

The "Train of Commemoration" expresses the hopes that those in charge at the Deutsche Bahn AG and in the German government, as well as those parliamentarians of the German Bundestag involved, will agree to proceed with a round-table.

The objective should be to pronounce a common recommendation by December 7, 2010, so that payments can promptly begin to the needy victims (including those in the Federal Republic of Germany). The German civil society, which has specialized in questions of the "Reichsbahn's" crimes, represented by the "Train of Commemoration", should be a full participating member of this round-table.

The "Train of Commemoration" considers that the common German historical guilt and debts necessitate common atonement. The moral capital invested by German civil society and the financial capital, in the hands of the Deutsche Bahn AG and its owner the German government, must be brought together and contribute to overcoming distrust and hatred existing between the surviving victims and the descendents of the culprits.

Berlin September 8, 2010

"Train of Commemoration"

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