

CLAIMS RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL

In re Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation
Case No. CV96-4849

Certified Award

to Claimant Karla Ninette Grosu
also acting on behalf of Stephanie Beatrice Beral-Klein
represented by Eyal Frost, Adv.

in re Accounts of Dr. Adolf Beral

Claim Number: 204901/MO

Award Amount: 181,680.00 Swiss Francs

This Certified Award is based upon the claim of Karla Ninette Grosu (the “Claimant”) to the accounts of Dr. Adolf Beral (the “Account Owner”) at the Zurich branch of the [REDACTED] (the “Bank”).

All awards are published. Where a claimant has not requested confidentiality, as in this case, only the name of the bank has been redacted.

Information Provided by the Claimant

The Claimant submitted a Claim Form identifying the Account Owner as her father, Dr. Adolf Beral, who was born on 8 June 1882 in Stanislav, Poland, and was married to Dr. Rachella Beral, née Grauer, on 1 June 1923 in Siret, Romania. The Claimant stated that her father, who was a lawyer, was the son of Moses Beral and Ester Beral, née Ernestine, and that he resided and worked in Siret, Romania from 1911 to 1941. The Claimant asserted that in approximately 1938 her father traveled to Zurich, Switzerland in order to open a bank account there. The Claimant further stated that in 1941 her father, who was Jewish, was deported by the Nazis and the Romanian authorities to Transnistria, Ukraine and Djurin, Sohargorodsk. The Claimant indicated that in 1945 her father returned to Romania and resided in Bacau, Romania until 1966. She stated that her father died on 21 November 1967 in Bucharest, Romania and that her mother died there on 24 December 1966. The Claimant indicated that her parents had three daughters: Rozalia Beral, who was born in 1929 in Siret, Romania and died on 3 August 1982 in Bucharest; the Claimant, who was born on 30 October 1930; and Stephanie Beatrice Beral-Klein, who was born on 7 February 1933 in Siret and is being represented by the Claimant in these proceedings. In support of her claim, the Claimant submitted copies of her birth certificate, her mother’s birth certificate, her mother’s medical school diploma and license to work as a medical doctor, approvals issued by Romanian authorities, indicating that her family was deported by the Nazis and the Romanian authorities in 1941 and repatriated in Romania in 1945, and her father’s death certificate.

Information Available in the Bank Record

The bank record consists of an account card. According to this record, the Account Owner was Dr. Adolf Beral, a lawyer from Siret, Romania. The bank record indicates that the Account Owner held a demand deposit account, which was opened on 30 April 1938, and a custody account, numbered L 63236, which was opened on 3 May 1938. The demand deposit account was closed on 28 February 1939 and the custody account was closed on 24 February 1939. The bank record does not show to whom the accounts at issue were paid, nor does this record indicate the value of these accounts. There is no evidence in the bank record that the Account Owner or his heirs closed the accounts and received the proceeds themselves.

The CRT's Analysis

Identification of the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly identified the Account Owner. Her father's name matches the published name of the Account Owner. The Claimant identified her father's city of residence and occupation, which match unpublished information about the Account Owner contained in the bank record. Furthermore, the Claimant stated that her father opened his accounts in 1938 in Zurich, which also match unpublished information contained in the bank record.

Status of the Account Owner as a Victim of Nazi Persecution

The Claimant has made a plausible showing that the Account Owner was a Victim of Nazi Persecution. The Claimant stated that the Account Owner was Jewish and that he was deported by the Nazis in 1941 to Transnistria, Ukraine.

The Claimant's Relationship to the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that she is related to the Account Owner by submitting documents, including her birth certificates and approvals issued by Romanian authorities, naming the Account Owner as her father. There is no information to indicate that the Account Owner has other surviving heirs.

The Issue of Who Received the Proceeds

Given the persecution of Jews in Romania by the Romanian government supported by the Nazi regime, which began in December 1937, given that the account was closed on 28 February 1939, after the imposition of Swiss visa requirements on 20 January 1939, and given the application of Presumptions (a), (i) and (j) contained in Appendix A,¹ the CRT concludes that it is plausible that the account proceeds were not paid to the Account Owners or his heirs. Based on its precedent and the Rules Governing the Claims Resolution Process (the "Rules"), the CRT applies presumptions to assist in the determination of whether or not Account Owners or their heirs received the proceeds of their accounts.

¹ An expanded version of Appendix A appears on the CRT II website -- www.crt-ii.org.

Basis for the Award

The CRT has determined that an Award may be made in favor of the Claimant. First, the claim is admissible in accordance with the criteria contained in Article 23 of the Rules. Second, the Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that the Account Owner was her father, and that relationship justifies an Award. Finally, the CRT has determined that it is plausible that neither the Account Owner nor his heirs received the proceeds of the claimed accounts.

Amount of the Award

Pursuant to Article 35 of the Rules, when the value of an account is unknown, as is the case here, the average value of the same or a similar type of account in 1945 is used to calculate the present value of the account being awarded. Based on the ICEP Investigation, in 1945 the average value of a demand deposit account was 2,140.00 Swiss Francs and the average value of a custody account was 13,000.00 Swiss Francs. The total value of one custody account and one demand deposit account is therefore 15,140.00 Swiss Francs. The present value of this amount is calculated by multiplying it by a factor of 12, in accordance with Article 37(1) of the Rules, to produce an award amount of 25,680.00 Swiss Francs for the demand deposit account and an award amount of 156,000.00 Swiss Francs for the demand deposit account. Thus, the total award amount is 181,680.00 Swiss Francs.

Division of the Award

The Claimant is representing her sister in these proceedings. According to Article 29 of the Rules, her sister is entitled to receive one-half of any payment made to the Claimant.

Initial Payment

Article 37(3)(a) of the Rules provides that where the value of an award is calculated using the value presumptions provided in Article 35 of the Rules, the initial payment to the claimant shall be 65% of the Certified Award, and the claimant may receive a second payment of up to 35% of the certified Award when so determined by the Court. In this case, the CRT has used the value presumptions of Article 35 of the Rules to calculate the account values and 65% of the total award amount is 118,092.00 Swiss Francs.

Scope of the Award

The Claimant should be aware that, pursuant to Article 25 of the Rules, the CRT will carry out further research on her claim to determine whether there are additional Swiss bank accounts to which she might be entitled, including research of the Total Accounts Database (consisting of records of 4.1 million Swiss bank accounts which existed between 1933 and 1945).

Certification of the Award

The CRT certifies this Award for approval by the Court and payment by the Special Masters.

Claims Resolution Tribunal

December 27, 2002

APPENDIX A

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the Tribunal presumes that neither the Account Owners, the Beneficial Owners, nor their heirs received the proceeds of a claimed Account in cases involving one or more of the following circumstances:¹

- a) the Account was closed and the Account records show evidence of persecution, or the Account was closed (i) after the imposition of Swiss visa requirements on January 20, 1939, or (ii) after the date of occupation of the country of residence of the Account Owner or Beneficial Owner, and before 1945 or the year in which the freeze of Accounts from the country of residence of the Account Owner or Beneficial Owner was lifted (whichever is later);
- b) the Account was closed after 1955 or ten years after the freeze of Accounts from the country of residence of the Account Owner or Beneficial Owner was lifted (whichever is later);
- c) the balance of the Account was reduced by fees and charges over the period leading up to the closure of the Account and the last known balance of the Account was small;
- d) the Account had been declared in a Nazi census of Jewish assets or other Nazi documentation;
- e) a claim was made to the Account after the Second World War and was not recognized by the bank;
- f) the Account Owner or Beneficial Owner had other Accounts that are open and dormant, suspended, or closed to profits, closed by fees, or closed to Nazi authorities;
- g) the only surviving Account Owner or Beneficial Owner was a child at the time of the Second World War;
- h) the Account Owners, the Beneficial Owners, and/or their heirs would not have been able to obtain information about the Account after the Second World War from the Swiss bank due to the Swiss banks' practice of withholding or misstating account information in their responses to inquiries by Account Owners, Beneficial Owners, and heirs because of the banks' concerns regarding double liability;²
- i) the Account Owners, Beneficial Owners, or their heirs resided in a Communist country in Eastern Europe after the War; and/or
- j) there is no indication in the bank records that the Account Owners, Beneficial Owners, or their heirs received the proceeds of the Account.³

¹ See Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland - Second World War, Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War: Final Report (2002) (hereinafter "Bergier Final Report"); see also Independent Committee of Eminent Persons, Report on Dormant Accounts of Victims of Nazi Persecution in Swiss Banks (1999)

(hereinafter "ICEP Report"). The CRT has also taken into account, among other things, various laws, acts, decrees, and practices used by the Nazi regime and the governments of Austria, the Sudetenland, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Free City of Danzig, Poland, the Incorporated Area of Poland, the *Generalgouvernement* of Poland, the Netherlands, Slovakia and France to confiscate Jewish assets held abroad.

² See Bergier Final Report at 443-44, 446-49; see also ICEP Report at 81-83.

³ As described in the Bergier Final Report and the ICEP Report, the Swiss banks destroyed or failed to maintain account transactional records relating to Holocaust-era accounts. There is evidence that this destruction continued after 1996, when Swiss law prohibited destruction of bank records. Bergier Final Report at 40 (stating "[i]n the case of Union Bank of Switzerland . . . , however, documents were being disposed of even after the Federal Decree [of 13 December 1996]"). The wholesale destruction of relevant bank records occurred at a time when the Swiss banks knew that claims were being made against them and would continue to be made for monies deposited by victims of Nazi persecution who died in the Holocaust and that were (i) improperly paid to the Nazis, see Albers v. Credit Suisse, 188 Misc. 229, 67 N.Y.S.2d 239 (N.Y. City Ct. 1946); Bergier Final Report at 443, (ii) that were improperly paid to the Communist controlled governments of Poland and Hungary, see Bergier Final Report at 450 -51, and possibly Romania as well, see Peter Hug and Marc Perrenoud, Assets in Switzerland of Victims of Nazism and the Compensation Agreements with East Bloc Countries (1997), and (iii) that were retained by Swiss Banks for their own use and profit. See Bergier Final Report at 446-49.

"The discussion on "unclaimed cash" persisted throughout the post-war period due to claims for restitution by survivors and heirs of the murdered victims, or restitution organizations acting on their behalf." Id. at 444. Nevertheless, the Swiss Banks continued to destroy records on a massive scale and to obstruct those making claims. ICEP Report, Annex 4 ¶ 5; In re Holocaust Victim Asset Litig., 105 F. Supp.2d 139, 155-56 (E.D.N.Y. 2000). Indeed, "[i]n May 1954, the legal representatives of the big banks co-ordinated their response to heirs [of account holders] so that the banks would have at their disposal a concerted mechanism for deflecting any kind of enquiry." Bergier Final Report at 446. Similarly, "the banks and their Association lobbied against legislation that would have required publication of the names of so called 'heirless assets accounts,' legislation that if enacted and implemented, would have obviated the ICEP investigation and the controversy of the last 30 years." ICEP Report at 15. Indeed, in order to thwart such legislation, the Swiss Bankers Association encouraged Swiss banks to underreport the number of accounts in a 1956 survey. "A meager result from the survey," it said, "will doubtless contribute to the resolution of this matter [the proposed legislation] in our favor." ICEP Report at 90 (quoting a letter from the Swiss Bankers Association to its board members dated June 7, 1956). "To summarize, it is apparent that the claims of surviving Holocaust victims were usually rejected under the pretext of bank secrecy . . . ", Bergier Final Report at 455, or outright deception about the existence of information, while wholesale destruction of bank records continued for over a half century. Under these circumstances, utilizing the fundamental evidentiary principles of United States law that would have applied to Deposited Assets claims had the class action lawsuits been litigated through trial, the CRT draws an adverse inference against the banks where documentary evidence was destroyed or is not provided to assist the claims administrators. See In re Holocaust Victim Asset Litig., 105 F. Supp.2d 139, 152 (E.D.N.Y. 2000); Reilly v. Natwest Markets Group, Inc., 181 F.3d 253, 266-68 (2d Cir. 1999); Kronisch v. United States, 150 F.3d 112, 126-28 (2d Cir. 1998).