

# CLAIMS RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL

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

## **Certified Award**

to Claimant [REDACTED]

**in re Account of Therese Herzog**

Claim Number: 203043/MBC

Award Amount: 156,000.00 Swiss Francs

This Certified Award is based upon the claim of [REDACTED] (the “Claimant”) to the Account of Therese Herzog (the “Account Owner”) at the Zurich branch of the [REDACTED] (the “Bank”).

All awards are published, but where a claimant has requested confidentiality, as in this case, the names of the claimant, any relatives of the claimant other than the account owner, and the bank have been redacted.

### **Information Provided by the Claimant**

The Claimant submitted a Claim Form identifying the Account Owner as his maternal grandmother, Therese Maria Herzog, who was born on 4 October 1857 in Vienna, Austria. The Claimant stated that his grandmother was a housewife who had five children: [REDACTED], the Claimant’s mother, who died on 17 November 1967; Benno Herzog, who died without issue; and [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The Claimant stated that his grandmother, who was Jewish, was forced to live in hiding at 4 Wegelegasse, Pötzelinsdorf in Vienna from 1938 until her death in 1941 of natural causes. The Claimant stated that he had one brother, [REDACTED], who died nine years ago. The Claimant stated that besides his mother, at least two of Therese Herzog’s other children also had children of their own. The Claimant indicated that several of these grandchildren of the Account Owner are still living, but did not provide specific information about these relatives, other than their names. The Claimant stated that he was born in Vienna on 9 December 1925.

In support of his claim, the Claimant submitted documents, including his parents’ death certificates and signature samples from Therese Herzog and Benno Herzog.

## **Information Available in the Bank Records**

The bank records consist of printouts from the bank's database and two power of attorney forms. According to these bank records, the Account Owner was Therese Herzog. One power of attorney form is dated 27 June 1931 and indicates that the Account Owner, who resided at Wegelergasse 4 in Vienna XVIII, owned a custody account.<sup>1</sup> It grants power of attorney over that account to Dr. Benno Herzog, who also resided at Wegelergasse 4. The second power of attorney form is dated 22 December 1931 and indicates that the Account Owner resided at Grosse Mohrengasse No. 25 in Vienna II. It grants a general power of attorney to Ferdinand Glückstern, a salesman who resided at Grosse Mohrengasse No. 36. A handwritten annotation on this power of attorney form indicates that on 4 January 1932 the amount of 3,218.90 United States Dollars was paid to or withdrawn by Ferdinand Glückstern.

The bank records do not show if or when the account was closed, or to whom it was paid, nor do they indicate the value of the account. The auditors who carried out the investigation of this bank to identify accounts of Victims of Nazi Persecution pursuant to instructions of the Independent Committee of Eminent Persons did not find the account in the Bank's system of open accounts, and they therefore presumed that it was closed. These auditors indicated that there was no evidence of activity on the account after 1945. There is no evidence in the bank's records that the Account Owner, the Power of Attorney Holder, or their heirs closed the account and received the proceeds themselves.

## **Information Available from the Austrian State Archives**

By decree on 26 April 1938, the Nazi Regime required Jews residing within Austria who held assets above a specified level to submit a census form registering their assets. In the records of the Austrian State Archives (Archive of the Republic, Finance), there are documents concerning the assets of Therese Herzog. These documents indicate that Therese Herzog was born on 4 October 1857, that she was a widow and a housewife, and that she resided at Wegelergasse 4, in Vienna XVIII, Austria. According to these documents, Therese Herzog registered with the Nazi authorities that she owned: one-third of a house located at Wegelergasse 4; securities issued by Austrian banks worth 15,519.17 Reichmarks; saving deposits and cash worth 5,516.40 Reichmarks as well as other valuables. There is no mention in the census records of assets held in a Swiss bank.

## **The CRT's Analysis**

### Identification of the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly identified the Account Owner. His grandmother's name matches the published name of the Account Owner. The Claimant has provided his grandmother's street

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<sup>1</sup> The bank records contain a power of attorney form that references a "*Titeldepot*," which is a custody account. Such forms were typically used by the Bank at the time regardless of whether the account in question was in fact a custody account. The CRT concludes that it is plausible that the Account Owner held such an account.

address in Vienna before the Second World War, which matches one of the unpublished addresses of the Account Owner contained in the bank documents and information contained in the Austrian State Archives. Finally, the Claimant submitted a sample of his grandmother's signature, which matches the signature sample contained in the bank documents.

#### 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 has shown that the Account Owner, his grandmother, was Jewish and was the target of Nazi persecution during the Nazi occupation of Austria, until her death in 1941.

#### The Claimant's Relationship to the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that he is related to the Account Owner by submitting documents showing that she is his grandmother. The Claimant stated that the Account Owner had other grandchildren, but the CRT notes that they have not submitted claims to the account of Therese Maria Herzog.

#### The Issue of Who Received the Proceeds

The facts of this case are similar to other cases that have come before the CRT in which, after the *Anschluss*, Austrian citizens who are Jewish report their assets in the 1938 census, and their accounts are closed unknown to whom or are transferred to Nazi-controlled banks. Given that the CRT's precedent indicates that it is plausible in such situations that the account proceeds were paid to the Nazis, and the application of Presumptions (h) and (j) contained in Appendix A,<sup>2</sup> the CRT concludes that it is plausible that the account proceeds were not paid to the Account Owner, the Power of Attorney Holders or their 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.

#### 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 criteria contained in Article 23 of the Rules. Second, the Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that the Account Owner was his grandmother, and that relationship justifies an Award. Finally, the CRT has determined that it is plausible that neither the Account Owner nor her heirs received the proceeds of the claimed account.

#### Amount of the Award

Although the bank documents show that on 4 January 1932 the amount of 3,218.90 United States Dollars was paid to or withdrawn by Ferdinand Glückstern, the value of the account on that date and during the period between 1933 and 1945 is unknown. Therefore, pursuant to Article 35 of

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<sup>2</sup> As described in the expanded version of Appendix A (see II.A.2), which appears on the CRT II website -- [www.crt-ii.org](http://www.crt-ii.org).

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 custody account was 13,000.00 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 a total award amount of 156,000.00 Swiss Francs.

#### Initial Payment

In this case, the Claimant is age 75 or older and is therefore entitled to receive payment of 100% of the total award amount.

#### **Certification of Award**

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

Claims Resolution Tribunal

December 31, 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:<sup>1</sup>

- 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;<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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

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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.

<sup>2</sup> See Bergier Final Report at 443-44, 446-49; *see also* ICEP Report at 81-83.

<sup>3</sup> 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).