

# CLAIMS RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL

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

## **Certified Award**

to Claimant [REDACTED]<sup>1</sup>

**in re Accounts of Alfred Löffler**

Claim Number: 600641/PY<sup>2</sup>

Award Amount: 156,000.00 Swiss Francs

This Certified Award is based upon the claim of [REDACTED], née [REDACTED] (the “Claimant”) to the accounts of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], Alfred Löffler and the company *Gerstle & Löffler*. This Award is to the accounts of Alfred Löffler (the “Account Owner”) at 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’s mother submitted an HCPO Claim identifying the Account Owner as the Claimant's maternal great-uncle, Alfred Löffler, who was Jewish and was born on 4 March 1882 in Munich, Germany. According to the Claimant, her great-uncle owned a famous department store in Munich named *Gerstle & Löffler*, which was located at Weinstrasse 3. The Claimant explained further that her great-uncle co-owned his store with the Claimant's grandmother, [REDACTED], née [REDACTED], who was born on 1 June 1880 in Munich. The Claimant stated that both Alfred Löffler and [REDACTED] were deported by train on 20 November 1941 from Munich to Riga. They both perished on the train.

The Claimant indicated that she was born on 13 March 1944 in the United States. In support of her claim, the Claimant submitted a document from the German Government regarding the fate

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<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED], née [REDACTED] originally filed a claim to the accounts of her parents, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], née [REDACTED], and her uncle, Alfred Löffler. [REDACTED] passed away in August 2001, so her daughter, Claimant [REDACTED], née [REDACTED], has assumed this claim.

<sup>2</sup> The Claimant submitted a claim, numbered B-00673, on 27 February 1998 to the Holocaust Claims Processing Office (the “HCPO”) of the New York State Banking Department. This claim was referred by the HCPO to the CRT and has been assigned claim number 600641.

of her great-uncle and grandmother, inheritance certificates listing the Claimant's mother as the heir of Alfred Löffler, and her mother's death certificate.

### **Information Available in the Bank Record**

The bank record consists of a customer card. According to this record, the Account Owner was Alfred Löffler who resided in Munich, and was owner of the company *Gerstle & Löffler GmbH*. The bank record indicates that the Account Owner held one demand deposit account and one custody account, numbered 40372. Both accounts were opened in September 1930.

The demand deposit account was closed on 20 June 1935 while the custody account was closed on 27 August 1938. The amount in the accounts on the dates of their closure is unknown.

The bank record does not show to whom these accounts were paid or 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 great-uncle's name and the name of the store that he owned match the unpublished names of the Account Owner and the company name stated on the customer card. The Claimant identified her great-uncle's city of residence, which matches unpublished information about the Account Owner 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 was killed in November 1941 while being deported to Riga.

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

The Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that she is related to the Account Owner by submitting documents demonstrating that she is his great-niece. These documents include the Account Owner's inheritance certificate, which names the Claimant's late mother, [REDACTED], as the niece and heir of the Account Owner, and the Claimant's own birth certificate, which indicates that her mother is [REDACTED].

## The Issue of Who Received the Proceeds

With respect to the custody account closed on 27 August 1938, given the application of Presumption (j) contained in Appendix A,<sup>3</sup> the CRT concludes that it is plausible that the account proceeds were not paid to the Account Owner 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.

With respect to the demand deposit account closed on 20 June 1935, the CRT has decided not to reach a decision at this time, pending further consideration as to whether or not the Account Owner or his heirs received the proceeds of that account.

## 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 great-uncle, 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 custody account.

## 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, the average value of a custody account in 1945 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.

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 101,400.00 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).

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<sup>3</sup> An expanded version of Appendix A appears on the CRT website—[www.crt-ii.org](http://www.crt-ii.org).

**Certification of the Award**

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

Claims Resolution Tribunal

November 26, 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 of Eminent Persons, Report on Dormant Accounts of Victims of Nazi Persecution in Swiss Banks (1999)

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(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).