

CLAIMS RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL

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

Certified Award

to Claimant [REDACTED]

in re Account of Eva Nathansohn

Claim Number: 219418/EZ¹

Award Amount: 47,400.00 Swiss Francs

This Certified Award is based upon the claim of [REDACTED] née Nathansohn, (the “Claimant”) to the account of Eva Nathansohn (the “Account Owner”) held at the Basel 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 herself as the Account Owner, who was born on 14 March 1925 in Freiburg, Germany. Her parents were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The Claimant’s father was a medical doctor and he died in 1927 in Germany. The Claimant’s mother was a musician. The Claimant stated that she is Jewish, and during her childhood she lived on Sedanstrasse in Freiburg, and in 1933 she left school because of Nazi persecution and arrived in Liverpool, United Kingdom, as part of the Kindertransport. She was detained in a refugee camp, and she was later taken in by the [REDACTED] family who voluntarily looked after her. The [REDACTED] family also helped the Claimant’s mother to escape from Germany. The Claimant’s mother arrived in England in August 1939. She died in England in April 1980. The Claimant further stated that her paternal grandparents, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], could not escape from Germany, and they perished in the concentration camps. The Claimant stated that she has lived in Liverpool since 1938, where she worked as a doctor’s assistant. In a telephone conversation with the CRT, the Claimant stated that she had no information about the circumstances surrounding the opening of the account and that she was a child during the Second World War.

¹ The Claimant submitted an additional claim to the account of Fanny Nathansohn, which is registered under the claim number 219417. The CRT will treat the claim to this account in a separate decision.

Information Available in the Bank Records

The bank records consist of a list of accounts that were frozen in the 1945 Freeze of German Assets and a printout from the Bank's database. According to these records, the Account Owner was Eva Nathansohn, who resided at Sedanstrasse 1, Freiburg, Germany, and held an account of unknown type.

The bank records indicate that on 25 August 1947 the account had a balance of 12.00 Swiss Francs. The bank records do not show when the account was opened, or to whom it was paid. 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 ("ICEP" or the "ICEP Investigation") did not find this 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 this account after 1945. There is no evidence in the bank records that the Account Owner closed the account and received the proceeds.

The CRT's Analysis

Identification of the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly identified herself as the Account Owner. Her own name matches the published name of the Account Owner. The Claimant provided her street address in Freiburg, Germany, which matches the unpublished information contained in the bank records. The Claimant has submitted a copy of her own passport as evidence of her identity.

Status of the Account Owner as a Victim of Nazi Persecution

The Claimant has made a plausible showing that she was a Victim of Nazi Persecution. The Claimant has indicated that she is Jewish and lived in Germany until 1938, when she was forced to leave school and was sent to the United Kingdom in the *Kindertransport*.

The Issue of Who Received the Proceeds

Based on its precedent and the Rules Governing the Claims Resolution Process (the "Rules"), the CRT applies presumptions to determine whether Account Owners or their heirs received the proceeds of their accounts. These presumptions are contained in Appendix A.² The CRT concludes in this case that Presumptions (a), (h), and (j) apply and it is therefore plausible that the account proceeds were not paid to the Account Owner.

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 she is the Account Owner, and that justifies an Award.

² An expanded version of Appendix A appears on the CRT II website -- www.crt-ii.org.

Finally, the CRT has determined that it is plausible that the Account Owner has not received the proceeds of the claimed account.

Amount of the Award

The bank records indicate that the value of the account as of 25 August 1947 was 12.00 Swiss Francs. In accordance with Article 37(1) of Rules, this amount is increased by an adjustment of 120.00 Swiss Francs, which reflects standardized bank fees charged to the account between 1945 and 25 August 1947. Consequently, the adjusted balance of the account at issue is 132.00 Swiss Francs. According to Article 35 of the Rules, if the amount in an account of unknown type was less than 3,950.00 Swiss Francs, and in the absence of plausible evidence to the contrary, the amount in the account shall be determined to be 3,950.00 Swiss Francs for that type of account. The present value of the amount of the award is determined by multiplying the balance as determined by Article 35 by a factor of 12, in accordance with Article 37(1) of the Rules, to produce a total award amount of 47,400.00 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 35% of the Certified Award, and the claimant may receive a second payment of up to 65% 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 value and 35% of the total award amount is 16,590.00 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

APPENDIX A

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the Tribunal presumes that neither the Account 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, and before 1945 or the year in which the freeze of Accounts from the country of residence of the Account 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 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 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 was a child at the time of the Second World War;
- h) the Account 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 and heirs because of the banks' concerns regarding double liability;²
- i) the Account 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 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).