

# CLAIMS RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL

---

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

## **Certified Award**

to Claimant Alexander Morris Stein  
also acting on behalf of Paul Gustav Stein

## **in re Account of Richard Stein**

Claim Number: 207486/JT

Award Amount: 25,680.00 Swiss Francs

This Certified Award is based upon the claim of Alexander Morris Stein (the “Claimant”) to the account of Richard Stein (the “Account Owner”) at 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 his father, Richard Stein, who was born on 30 May 1883 in Brno, Czechoslovakia, and was married to Vilma Stein, née Nerber, in March 1922 in Brno. The Claimant stated that his mother was born on 22 August 1897. The Claimant further stated that his father produced and exported beer and co-owned *Schindler & Stein*, an export company, located at Jakubske Namesi 1 in Brno. The Claimant stated that his father lived at Kiosk 2 in Brno between 1922 and 1933, at Alleestrasse 41 from 1934 to 1940, and at Bratislavská 65 from 1941 to 1942. The Claimant further stated that his father and mother were transported to the Chelmno concentration camp in Poland on 18 April 1942, where they were both killed within four days of arrival. The Claimant asserted that the information regarding his parents’ deaths has been corroborated by the Yad Vashem authorities in Israel. In support of his claim, the Claimant provided a copy of a letter from Attorney Paul L. Weiden to the Consul General of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, dated 29 December 1947, which indicates the Claimant’s father held property interests in Prague. The Claimant also submitted a family tree, a copy of his own birth certificate, and a copy of his father's death certificate. He also submitted a copy of a guardianship agreement signed by Richard Stein in 1940, giving his cousin Lilly legal guardianship of the Claimant and his brother Paul, both of whom were in Panama City at the time. The Claimant further stated that he is the oldest son, and that he is representing his brother, Paul Stein, in these proceedings. The Claimant indicated that he was born on 18 June 1923 in Brno.

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

The bank records consist of a customer-opening card. According to this record, the Account Owner was Richard Stein of Prague, Czechoslovakia. The bank record indicates that the Account Owner held a demand deposit account.

The account was closed on 30 August 1940 unknown to whom. The amount in the account on the date of its closure is unknown. There is no evidence in the bank record that the Account Owner or his heirs closed the account and received the proceeds themselves.

## **The CRT's Analysis**

### Identification of the Account Owner

The Claimant has plausibly identified the Account Owner. His father's name matches the published name of the Account Owner. The Claimant identified his father's connection to Prague, 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 that he perished in the Chelmno concentration camp in 1942.

Moreover, the CRT notes that a database containing the names of victims of Nazi persecution includes a person named Richard Stein, and indicates that his date of birth was 31 May 1883, that his place of birth was Brno, Czechoslovakia, and that his date of death was 21 April 1942, which matches the information about the Account Owner provided by the Claimant. The database is a compilation of names from various sources, including the Yad Vashem Memorial of Israel.

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

The Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that he and his brother are sons of the Account Owner by submitting document including the Claimant's birth certificate, the Account Owner's death certificate, and a legal guardianship agreement assigning guardianship of the Claimant and his brother to the Account Owner's cousin. There is no information to indicate that the Account Owner has surviving heirs other than the Claimant's brother, Paul Stein, whom he represents in these proceedings.

## The Issue of Who Received the Proceeds

Given the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Nazi troops in 1939, the confiscatory legislation already in place as early as 1939,<sup>1</sup> and the application of Presumptions (a) 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 Owners or their heirs. Based on its precedent and 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 the criteria contained in Article 23 of the Rules. Second, the Claimant has plausibly demonstrated that the Account Owner was his 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 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, in 1945 the average value of a demand deposit account was 2,140.00 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 a total award amount of 25,680.00 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 value, and 65% of the total award amount is 16,692.00 Swiss Francs.

## Division of the Award

The Claimant is representing his brother in these proceedings. According to Article 29 of the Rules, the Claimant and his brother are each entitled to receive one half of the total Award amount.

---

<sup>1</sup> As described in the expanded version of Appendix A (see II. A. 7), which appears on the CRT II website -- [www.crt-ii.org](http://www.crt-ii.org).

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

**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 his claim to determine whether there are additional Swiss bank accounts to which he 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  
October 24, 2002

## 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:<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, 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;<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>

---

<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) (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).