

Statement of Eugenie Lieberman
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Struggles of Recovering Assets for Holocaust Survivors
September 18, 2014

My name is Eugenie Lieberman, born Eugenie Segalowitz, daughter of Ivar Segalowitz. Ivar was a Holocaust survivor who lived and raised his family in Great Neck, New York. Sadly, my father passed away just a few months ago, succumbing to Prostate Cancer on June 23, 2014. My mother, Bernice Segalowitz, who still resides in Great Neck, my brother, Ralph Segalowitz, who lives in East Setauket, LI, our children, Suzanne, Melissa, Jonathon, and Michael, spouses, Cathy and Jay, and I will carry on his legacy of fighting for the rights of survivors. The sense of purpose and dedication to humanitarian causes that my father instilled in us brings me here today.

My father was born in Memel/Klaipeda Lithuania on August 17, 1930 of parents who were German citizens. The entire family, parents, Erna and Boris, Aunt Eugenie (after whom I am named), Uncle Tobias Mazur, his grandmother and great aunt, were all killed by the Nazi's. Ivar survived life in three concentration camps, having endured imprisonment in the Kovno Ghetto, then Dachau, Auschwitz/ Birkenau, and finally a death march to Buchenwald. At fourteen years of age, on April 11, 1945, he was liberated from Buchenwald by the American Army. He was the only member of his incarcerated family to survive. Upon liberation, he was shipped to a school for orphaned children of the Holocaust in France. After being there for two years, his aunt, his mother's sister, who had come to the United States before WWII, found him with the help of the Red Cross and sponsored him to come to this country.

When he got to the United States, he finished his high school education by attending Stuyvesant High School at night and obtained vocational training as a machinist during the day. In the following years, he worked in machine shops, began attending college at night, got married and served in the United States Army Intelligence Corp as a corporal during the Korean conflict. In 1968, he graduated from the City College of NY with a Bachelor's degree in Physics.

My father spent most of his working career in manufacturing engineering, serving as VP of Manufacturing for two companies on Long Island, and then as a consultant, obtaining 6 patents by the end of his time in the public sector.

In 2002, he was elected for his first three year term as a Great Neck Parks Commissioner. He served in that capacity for three consecutive terms, making significant contributions to the community, for a total of nine years.

Before World War II, Ivar's father, Boris, was a successful processor and distributor of Flax products in Lithuania. Ivar's grandmother owned a popular shoe store. My father always believed that his father would have provided for his offspring with Life Insurance. He knows that his father and grandmother were responsible business people, who were committed to their families. They would have purchased insurance in good faith.

My father, Ivar Segalowitz, survived several camps and death marches and was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. He was a U.S. military and Korean War veteran and a former elected official on Long Island. He was also the heir to several insurance policies – likely sold by European life insurance companies. Yet after all this service and participation in American civic life, he was unable to employ the basic constitutional right to sue insurance companies who cheated his family.

For as many years as I can remember, my father was active in pressing for all survivors to have their insurance rights restored, and to find help for the tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors living in poverty. He was on the Executive Committee of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation, and had traveled to Washington, D.C. on several occasions to lobby the New York Congressional delegation on these issues. He also reached out, on numerous occasions, to New York House Members and Senators to no avail.

My father was tortured by the fact that the United States government he revered and served would oppose his having the basic right to go to Court to pursue his family's insurance policies. This was tragically the case under both Presidents Bush and Obama. He knew he might not win, but how could he not even have the right to have a judge and jury of his peers hear his case? He was also bitterly disappointed that Jewish organizations such as the Claims Conference, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), American Jewish Committee (AJC), B'nai B'rith, World Jewish Congress, and Agudas Israel would deny him and other survivors their basic civil rights.

He could not understand how Congress repeatedly turned the survivors down taking the word of non-survivor organizations and so-called leaders such as Stuart Eizenstat and others who acted like they knew better than my father and others – who survived hell on earth and asked for nothing more than their basic rights to be respected. In December 2013, even as he battled with his cancer that was growing more serious, my father left his sick bed to come into Manhattan to join a protest with other survivors when the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous held a dinner honoring the chief Washington lobbyist for Allianz. Allianz is the German insurance company that refused to honor the insurance policies his family members had bought before the war – along with the policies of thousands of other survivors. It is the same company that provided insurance for the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp and the Lodz Ghetto at the same time it was selling life insurance to Jewish people who were murdered there.

It is unfathomable to me at this point that this giant in life died as a second class citizen under U.S. law, despite the incredible losses he endured, and without the ability to reclaim the legacies of his parents, grandparents, and other relatives. After all, he was at the time one of thousands – many of whom have already died in frustration and humiliation, whose humanity has been denied by their own government.

Now Ivar is gone and will never have the satisfaction of learning about this part of his family's history – even though the records exist.

Ivar Segalowitz Insurance Claims

Ivar had spent an extensive amount of time and effort compiling information to support his claims. He had presented these documents and information to the proper organizations, institutions, and governmental agencies with no satisfactory response. From the available evidence, we can draw the conclusion that it was the intent of our relatives to purchase and keep their policies in force until they were needed. We only ask your assistance in obtaining the definitive proof that these policies existed and providing the judicial forum in which to obligate the companies to disburse the benefits to the insured's legal beneficiaries and heirs.

Ivar submitted claims to the International Commission for Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) on the following relatives whose names were listed on the ICHEIC website:

Erna Segalowitz his mother

Siegmund Joseph, his maternal grandfather

Minna (Benjamin) Joseph, is maternal grandmother

Walter Lephene (Lepane) – Uncle, Mother's sister's husband

Margot (Joseph) Lephene (Lepane) – Aunt, Mother's sister

The only policy that was acknowledged was for Siegmund Joseph, his grandfather, who died in 1929 and whose policy was paid out. His name was on the list published. However, as to the other four relatives whose names were published, who all were alive during the Holocaust and perished, ICHEIC "couldn't find" any information about any of them.

In other words the only one that these companies "found" was the one that was already paid, so there was no harm in giving him that information. However, the unpaid policies remain secret and not accessible to Ivar despite the fact that the German insurers published his relatives' names on the ICHEIC website, proving that these individuals did have policies. But the system has simply denied him all information, including the names of the companies that sold the policies! (ICHEIC sent Ivar \$1000 as a "humanitarian payment.")

This was part of ICHEIC's deal with Germany – names were published but the identity of the companies remained secret. That is ridiculous. And since Ivar was a Holocaust survivor, he does not have the right to go to court to get this information from Allianz, or the German Insurance Association which placed the names on the ICHEIC website. There is no legal remedy for him due to the U.S. government's court filings and the failure of Congress to act. As my father would have, I am asking that the leaders of this Congress introduce and pass legislation restoring survivors' insurance rights, like the legislation that was blocked in 2012, as soon as you can in 2015.

Needs of Indigent Holocaust Survivors

My father also devoted many hours in his retirement years advocating for the needs of indigent survivors who could not afford the basic necessities for a dignified old age. Thankfully, my father's financial situation was such that he could obtain the care he needed. But he knew that so many other survivors were not so lucky. He understood how many survivors suffered from unimaginable physical and emotional injuries they suffered at the hands of the Nazi regime. If he were here today, he would also urge Congress to use its influence with the German government and other companies and countries that profited from the Holocaust to provide full funding for the needs of Holocaust survivors who need help throughout the world.

June 24, 2003

Ivar Segalowitz
83 Allenwood Road
Great Neck NY 11023 USA

E-Mail: ivarseg@yahoo.com

TNT International Mail
LHR / LCY / 690547 / 001
Int. Antwoordnummer
C.C.R.I Numero 5120
3000 VB Rotterdam
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Nederland

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed are five claims for members of my family, found in a search of your data:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| *Erna (Joseph) Segalowitz | Mother |
| *Sigmund Joseph | Maternal Grandfather |
| *Minna (Benjamin) Joseph | Maternal Grandmother |
| *Walter Lepehne (Lepane) | Uncle, My Mothers sisters husband |
| *Margot (Joseph) Lepehne (Lepane) | Aunt, My Mothers Sister. |

Enclosed is also a family tree.

I am a child survivor of the holocaust. During the war I was in the Kovno Ghetto and KZ, Dachau, Auschwitz/Birkenau and Buchenwald. In Auschwitz I was tattooed Number B-2879.

In all the claims I am not sure who the policy holder, insured or beneficiary are, however I am the sole survivor of this family as you can ascertain from the family tree.

Thank you, for your attention

Ivar Segalowitz

Joseph Max	Germany 1894	List A	
Joseph Minna	Germany	List B	
Joseph Moritz	Germany 1882	List A	
Joseph Otto	Germany	List B	
Joseph Paul	Germany	List B	
Joseph Paul	Germany 1895	List A	
Joseph Pauline	Germany	List B	
Joseph Peter	Germany	List B	
Joseph Renate	Germany	List B	
Joseph Resi	Germany 1918	List A	
Joseph Richard	Germany	List B	
Joseph Rosa Sara	Germany 1895	List A	
Joseph Rudolf	Germany 1923	List A	
Joseph Sally	Germany	List B	
Joseph Salomon	Germany	List B	
Joseph Siegbert	Germany 1881	List A	
Joseph Siegmund	Germany	List B	- paid'06
Joseph Walter			

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Last Name	First Name	Last Known Residence	Birth Year	Where Policy was Issued	Insurance Company
Segalowitz	Adolf	Germany	1878		List A
Segalowitz [Joseph]	Erna	Germany	1905		List A

Potential Holocaust Era Insurance Policyholders (2005)

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Last Name	First Name	Last Known Residence	Birth Year	Where Policy was Issued	Insurance Company
Lepehne	Alfred	Germany			List B
Lepehne	Georg	Germany	1887		List A
Lepehne	Kurt	Germany	1896		List A
Lepehne	Margot	Germany	1908		List A
Lepehne	Walter	Germany	1903		List A

Potential Holocaust Era Insurance Policyholders (2005)

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15: Ralph
Doel



Ivar Segalowitz
83 Allenwood Rd.
Great Neck NY 11023
USA *

August 19, 2005

Dear Claimant,

I am writing in regard to your claim inquiry or inquiries submitted to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) and am pleased to offer you an award of \$1,000 under ICHEIC's humanitarian process. Please note, an award check shall be mailed to you separately in the next six (6) weeks. No further action is required on your part to receive such payment.

In your ICHEIC claim form, you provided information that enabled ICHEIC to conclude that the individual(s) named in your claim possibly held some form of insurance. As a result, ICHEIC would like to acknowledge this likelihood with a humanitarian award.

As you know, ICHEIC was established to address specific questions relating to Holocaust-era insurance policies. While some claims could be validated by claimants or companies, or as a result of ICHEIC's own research, other claims had less strong evidence. In recognition of the fact that some claims cannot be validated due to the ravages of war and the passage of time, ICHEIC created a broader "humanitarian" award category, under which you have been determined eligible to receive a payment.

Please note that this humanitarian payment is made only to the claimant listed on the ICHEIC claim inquiry or inquiries. Additional humanitarian payments will not be distributed to individuals listed as additional heirs to various policyholders on your claim inquiry or inquiries. If you listed additional heirs on your claim inquiry or inquiries, you have the right to share your award with these heirs as you see fit. ICHEIC hopes that you will choose to exercise this option as appropriate.

If you have any other questions regarding this humanitarian award or any other Holocaust-era insurance matter, you should contact the ICHEIC help line. The appropriate telephone numbers are listed on the back of this letter.

I fully recognize that no amount of money could compensate for the painful suffering and historic injustices of the Holocaust. Nonetheless, I sincerely hope that you will regard this as a small acknowledgement of those injustices.

Sincerely,

Samuel R. Berger
Senior Counselor for Humanitarian Claims, ICHEIC

*If you have received this letter and the address listed above is not the correct address for the claimant, and you know the correct details of the claimant, please call ICHEIC at 1-212-671-5073 or toll free on the telephone numbers listed on the back of this letter.

Ivar Segalowitz, 83, Holocaust survivor from Great Neck, dies

July 2, 2014 by JOAN GRALLA / joan.gralla@newsday.com



Ivar Segalowitz, whose belief in life's "limitless possibilities" was not diminished by the Holocaust, died from cancer June 24 at his Great Neck home. He was 83.

"Absolutely nothing, even the worst catastrophe that could befall anyone, could temper his spirit," said his son, Ralph Segalowitz, of East Setauket. "He believed in the essential goodness of people."

Ivar Segalowitz, born in Lithuania in 1930, was 10 when the Nazis occupied the country. He and his extended family were exiled to the Kovno ghetto. Segalowitz's parents saved their only child from being shot with other Kovno children the Nazis deemed too young by adding two years to his age and getting him trained as a machinist's helper.

His skill was later exploited by the Germans at various concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau. All but one relative, an aunt who immigrated to the United States before the war, perished in the camps.

After the war, Segalowitz recovered his health at a French orphanage, where he spent two years. Then his aunt, Margot Lepane, found the 17-year-old and brought him to Manhattan to live with her.

During the day, Segalowitz attended Stuyvesant High School; at night, he studied machinery at a vocational school.

He later found work as a machinist, met his wife of 60 years, Bernice, and joined the Army, which put him to work in the Intelligence Corps because he spoke five languages.

After his service, Segalowitz rose through the ranks to run manufacturing operations for Long Island electronic companies, moving to Great Neck in 1966. A graduate of City College of New York with a degree in physics, he holds multiple patents for designs for the direct mail industry, including an apparatus that bands stacks of envelopes. From 2003 to 2011, Segalowitz was the Great Neck Park District commissioner. The elected post combined his love for biking, skating and skiing with his talent for finding affordable ways to upgrade parks.

He also quietly helped struggling Holocaust survivors. "He never asked for anything; he just wanted to contribute," his son said.

Segalowitz never stopped battling European insurers who failed to honor the policies they sold to

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Holocaust victims. An international reparations commission set up in 1998 paid \$300 million to claimants and \$190 million of humanitarian aid. That's far less than those polices were worth, according to a 2011 congressional report.

In March 2013, Segalowitz was a member of a delegation of Holocaust survivors who met with Vice President Joe Biden's staff at the White House to ask them to intercede. In addition to his wife and son, Segalowitz is survived by a daughter, Genie Lieberman, of Broward County, Florida; and four grandchildren.

Services were held June 26 at Riverside-Nassau North Chapels in Great Neck. He was buried at Calverton National Cemetery.

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