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By Henry Weinstein

## **Holocaust Survivors' Insurance Claims Get Boost: LA Ruling Says State's Courts Can Hear Cases Against European Insurers**

**Insurance companies like Assicurazioni Generali have argued, for example in the Stern vs. Generali case, that because the corporate office for Generali is located in Trieste Italy, and because the policy was written in pre-World War II Czechoslovakia, the California courts are no place to resolve Holocaust-related insurance disputes.**

Claremont attorney William Shernoff argued that Generali has conducted business and owns a subsidiary in the state since 1958 and does nearly \$27 million a year in business in within California.

A Los Angeles judge ruled Monday, that in fact, California courts do have the authority to hear cases against European insurance companies that have refused to honor decade-old insurance policies and continue to deny claims filed by Holocaust survivors and their families.

The precedent setting ruling is a chance for Holocaust victims, who have previously been denied by insurance companies, to have their day in court. "Let this landmark ruling be the shot heard round the world that it will not be business as usual for insurance companies who are accused of stonewalling Nazi victims," said Lisa Stern, Shernoff's co-counsel and relative of the family who brought the case against Generali.