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By Alan Abrahamson

Searching for Justice

For nearly half a century, relatives of Mor and Regina Stern have tried to collect on insurance policies purchased from the Italian insurance conglomerate Assicurazioni Generali after all but two members of the Stern family died in the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

In the years before being sent to Auschwitz, Mor Stern began purchasing insurance policies in 1929. Adolf Stern, one of the couple's older sons, remembers his father sending him to Prague to prepay on policy premiums for "five, six years." He also remembers there being five or six policies. In all, the Stern's policies were valued at \$15,000 in 1939.

After being liberated from the concentration camp, Adolf Stern returned to Prague to collect on the insurance policies his father told him any surviving family members were entitled to. After reaching the office and unable to produce documentation of the policies or death certificates, Adolf Stern was escorted out.

Attorney Lisa Stern along with her husband Alan Stern and attorney William Shernoff have filed a \$135-million lawsuit against Generali. The Stern family has become the first family to ever file a Holocaust-related lawsuit in a United States court against an insurance company.