Chase bankers on Nazis — report

By CORKY SIEMASZKO

Chase National Bank — the precursor of today's Chase Manhattan Bank — allegedly helped the Nazis plunder Jewish property in France during World War II, according to a published report.

The New York-based bank, controlled by the Rockefeller family, closed Jewish accounts even before the Germans ordered them to do so and did business with the Nazis while they were sending Jews to the gas chambers, Newsweek magazine reports in this week's edition.

And while the U.S. was at war with the Nazis, Chase also apparently helped German banks do business with their overseas branches, the magazine reported.

Chase Manhattan is now the largest bank company in the U.S. with more than $300 billion in assets.

Chase general counsel William McDavid could not be reached for comment yesterday. But he told Newsweek that Chase intends to compensate Jewish account holders whose assets were illegally plundered.

But lawyers representing Holocaust survivors who have filed a class-action lawsuit against French and British banks that allegedly froze their accounts during the war intend to name Chase Manhattan to their lawsuit and are investigating the wartime role of another big U.S. bank, J.P. Morgan, the magazine reported.

While many other U.S. businesses and banks closed down their Paris operations after France fell to the Germans, Chase National remained open and even thrived.

The relationship between Chase and the Nazis apparently was so cozy that Carlos Niedermann, the Chase branch chief in Paris, wrote his superior in Manhattan that the bank enjoyed "very special esteem" with top German officials and "a rapid expansion of deposits," according to Newsweek.

Niedermann's letter was written in May 1942 — five

Japanese signed surrender aboard the Missouri, Arizona at the U.S. battleships that were sunk in the Hawaiian harbor at the 57th anniversary of the attack.

Gymnast walking

Inspired by actor Christopher Reeve's fight to overcome spinal injuries suffered in a horseback-riding accident, Sang has become involved in the fight to increase awareness of her condition. She recently attended a
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volved in the fight to increase
awareness of her condition.
She recently attended a
groundbreaking ceremony for
a state-of-the-art spinal cord
research center at Rutgers
University in New Jersey.
"I had a dream last night," Sang said in English during the
reception. "I was able to walk
again. It was so beautiful.
Now, Sang is gearing up for
her first Christmas.
"We are going to do some-
thing special for her. I see
her celebrate Christmas in China. She un-
derstands Christmas but
doesn't get the feeling."
Although the Goodwill
Games' insurance policy cov-
ers Sang's treatment, she still
counts on donations for living
expenses. So far, she has re-
ceived more than $100,000.
Donations may be mailed to
Gymnast Sang, c/o Sang Lan, R.D.
Box 552, Armonk, N.Y., 10504.

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Niedermann's letter was
written in May 1942, five
months after the Japanese
bombed Pearl Harbor and the
U.S. also went to war with Ger-
many.
McDavid told Newweek
that Chase had little control
over Niedermann's actions.
The revelation that a U.S.
bank might be involved in the
plunder of Jewish assets
comes in the wake of an agree-
ment by Swiss banks to com-
penstate Holocaust survivors
$1.25 billion for pillaging their
savings.
Recently declassified docu-
ments revealed that at least
300 U.S. companies continued
doing business in Germany
during the war, Newweek re-
ported. And subsidiaries of
Ford and General Motors have
been accused of forcing thou-
sands of Jews, Poles and oth-
ers to work as slave laborers.