

Some Suspected of Nazi War Crimes Are

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

On national holidays they are often the first in their neighborhoods to hang out the American Flag. They go to church, work hard, and tend their flower gardens. They are called model neighbors — friendly kind and unobtrusive.

Their neighbors do not understand how they could be under investigation for Nazi war crimes.

But, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, at least 85 naturalized American citizens and resident aliens, including some most ardently praised by their neighbors, are suspected of having concealed participation in World War II atrocities in order to enter the United States after the war.

Who are some of these people? Where do they live? What are they doing? What do they and their neighbors have to say about the allegations? And why has it taken until now, 31 years after the end of World War II, to step up or resolve the investigations?

Immigration Service List

Many of the names were first provided to the Immigration Service more than a decade ago by Jewish groups and other war crimes archivists. Those who came under official investigation might never have been known publicly except for the fact that the Immigration Service, in response to some charges of foot-dragging on the Nazi cases, released the names of 37 suspects in June 1974. Many are being investigated today, and the list has been expanded through additional allegations from Israel and other sources.

Almost all the suspects are from Eastern Europe, particularly the former republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia that were overrun by the Nazis in World War II and pressed into the liquidation of the Jews and the war against the Soviet Union. The territories were taken over by the Soviet after the war, and that remains an emotional issue with the suspects, most of whom are fiercely anti-Communist.

The Government has said that 85 persons are under investigation for participating in Nazi war crimes. Last week, two Latvians and a Lithuanian became



Edgars Laipenieks of Solana Beach, Calif., a former Latvian intelligence officer, is under investigation for wartime activities.

the first resident aliens to face United States deportation action in more than 20 years, on the ground of concealing war crimes to enter the country. They face hearings on Nov. 15.

Also, the Government said that at least four naturalized American citizens charged with war crimes would soon face Federal civil suits for their denaturalization, a preliminary step to the deportation of citizens.

The Case of Bishop Trifa

Another denaturalization case—only the second ever brought against an alleged war criminal here—is already under way. It charges Valerian D. Trifa, Bishop of the Rumanian Orthodox Episcopate in Grass Lake, Mich., with having lied to the immigration authorities about his activities as a student member of the Iron Guard and his alleged participation wartime atrocities in Bucharest in 1941.

Most prominent of the three aliens charged last week was Boleslavs Maikovskis, a 72-year-old carpenter from Mineola, L.I., who entered the United States in 1951 as a purported displaced person. He was an alleged member of the pro-Nazi Latvian police department in Re-

zekne that was accused of selecting Jews, including children, for execution from 1941 to 1943. Mr. Maikovskis was tried in absentia in the Soviet Union and sentenced to death in 1965. The United States has refused Soviet demands for his extradition, a policy that the United States shows no signs of changing.

No one has been answering the doorbell at the three-story house in Mineola where Mr. Maikovskis and his wife have been living for more than a decade. Sometimes there are lights on inside but no one comes to the door.

Neighbors on the quiet, tree-lined avenue describe the couple as unobtrusive and friendly, and as two people who often sat quietly in their garden and attended a nearby church.

Another of the three aliens facing deportation action, Bronius Kaminskas of Hartford, initially appeared to be confused by the allegations. A 73-year-old Lithuanian who came here in 1947, he is accused of shooting 200 Jews, including 68 children, and selecting another 400 Jews for execution.

He denied the allegations and said that he was a wagonmaker in the war.

Defended by Landlady

"Oh, no, no, no, no," said his Lithuanian landlady at the \$20-a-week room he occupies alone. Oh, no, he's not a Nazi. He ran from Communism. He hates Communism. He no can kill a fly."

Another neighbor, James Mellon, was quoted as saying that Mr. Kaminskas rides his bicycle around the neighborhood collecting material to make toys for children.

The third alien facing deportation, Karlis Detlavs, 65, of Baltimore, also denied allegations that, as a member of the pro-Nazi Latvian Legion, he had participated in the shooting and selection of Jews for execution at Riga. After coming here in 1950 he worked at the General Electric cable factory until 1973, when his left leg was amputated for cancer. Nearby residents called him a model neighbor and praised his well-tended garden.

In its denaturalization suit against Bishop Trifa in Federal Court in Detroit, the Government charged that, as head of the National Union of Rumanian Chris-

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Known as Model Citizens



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Andrija Artukovic, in photograph made in the 1940's, lives in Seal Beach, Calif. He is wanted in Yugoslavia on charges of war crimes.

tian Students, Bishop Trifa had participated in anti-Jewish atrocities and concealed the record to enter the United States as an avowed displaced person in 1950 and to gain naturalization in 1957.

After initially denying the charges, Bishop Trifa has declined to discuss the case publicly. He has also fought making a court deposition, winning several postponements.

The allegations in the Government case were rejected last week by a spokesman for the National Council of Churches. Responding to questions about protests against Bishop Trifa's membership on the council's governing board, the spokesman, Warren Day, said, "We did a lot of checking and it doesn't hold up under any kind of investigation."

Another controversial and long-stalled case concerns Andrija Artukovic, former Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs in the wartime pro-Nazi regime in Croatia. He is wanted in Yugoslavia on charges of murdering thousands of Serbs, Jews and gypsies.

He arrived here in 1948 under another

name and was discovered and arrested in 1951 to face the nation's first deportation action against an alleged former Nazi. But Yugoslavia requested his extradition, and that move was opposed by the State Department and by some influential church groups and politicians on the ground that he would be subject to political persecution in Yugoslavia.

An immigration hearing officer found in his favor in 1959 and the Government has never pressed the case further. There are indications, however, that the State Department may be reviewing the matter again.

Today, Mr. Artukovic lives in closely guarded seclusion in the beachfront development of Surfside Colony in Seal Beach, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Relatives live nearby.

Names Provided by Israel Sources

The Government has not released the names of others now under intensive investigation. But immigration investigators have just returned to Israel this weekend for the second time in a month to seek eyewitness testimony against certain leading suspects, and Israeli sources have disclosed some of those on whom material was provided.

Among these are a number of people previously identified as being under investigation by the United States authorities. They include the following:

Karl Linnas, a 57-year-old native of Tartu, Esthonia, who came here in 1951 and was naturalized in 1960. Mr. Linnas was charged by the Russians with war crimes as administrator of a concentration camp at Tartu and condemned to death in absentia in 1962. The United States denied Soviet requests for his extradition.

In an interview last week in a cluttered house in Greenlawn, L.I., where he lives alone, he derided the charges as Communist propaganda. But he declined to discuss his wartime service in detail, saying only "I was an Army guy." He indicated he might say more "maybe when all this gets straightened out."

"All I know is that he is a nice man and a good neighbor," said Mrs. Frank Wuestman, who lives next door. "War is war and everybody gets mixed up in it somehow anyway," she added.

Mikola and Serge Kowalczyk, two brothers from the Ukraine who came here in 1950. They have been under investigation in connection with the slayings of Jews in Lubomil.

Both brothers are tailors and live in North Philadelphia. Serge Kowalczyk, 56, said in a brief interview last week that the allegations were untrue. "No, I'm not afraid," he said in heavily accented English. "If I were afraid we would not have lived here all this time."

Mikola Kowalczyk declined comment, but neighbors said that every holiday the Kowalczyk family was the first to hang out the American Flag and the first to put lanterns in the windows at Halloween.

A policeman who is a neighbor of the other brother said, "They are good people from what I can see. They get up early in the morning and work hard every day."

Edgars Laipenieks, a 63-year-old former Latvian intelligence officer and antipartisan fighter who came here in 1960. He is now living in Solana Beach near San Diego. Last week he disclosed that he had performed spy missions for the Central Intelligence Agency in the 1960's. He said that the C.I.A. had paid his expenses for trips to Japan, Alaska, San Francisco and Washington for him to collect and disseminate certain unspecified information about the Soviet Union. The C.I.A., he said, had also talked to the Immigration Service for information on his case and informed him in July that the investigation had been closed. The agency confirmed that Mr. Laipenieks had done some work for it.

Edmund Gustav Macs, a 72-year-old Latvian who came to the United States in 1949. He is under investigation in connection with wartime murders in Lumbazu.

Today he is pastor of a small Lutheran congregation in Tacoma, Wash. He has denied the allegations, calling them Communist propaganda.

"There is nothing, just nothing to all this," said Mrs. Macs, who said her husband would not come to the door.

"We have gone through two terrible wars, lived under Hitler and Communism," she said. "Why have we to suffer more?"

Emils Verzemnieks of nearby Puyallup, president of the congregation at Mr. Macs' Tacoma Latvian Lutheran Church, recalled that the Germans moved the Jews into ghettos, then out to forced labor on the farms and back to the ghettos. But, he said, "This happened all over Latvia and it was the fault of the Germans, not of Pastor Macs."

Vilis Hazners, a 71-year-old Latvian who came here in 1956 as an avowed displaced person from Germany. He has been under investigation regarding allegations of atrocities by Latvian Police. He is the former president of the Committee for a Free Latvia in Washington and delegate to the Assembly of Captive European Nations. He is now living on a well-kept 104-acre farm near Whitehall, N.Y., close to the Vermont border.

In a recent telephone interview he said he had been a major fighting with German forces on the Eastern Front but declined to discuss the allegations directly, referring further inquiries to his attorney, Ivars Berzins, who also refused to comment on the charges.

One major factor in increased public and Government interest in the war crimes allegations was the arrest here in 1972 of Hermine Braunsteiner Ryan, a Queens housewife who was identified as a former guard at the Maidanek concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Poland. The Government opened its first Nazi denaturalization case against her, but she agreed to voluntarily relinquish her citizenship and was then extradited to West Germany, where she is now on trial with others for murder.

Since then, Representative Joshua Eilberg, Democrat of Pennsylvania, chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, and Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, a committee member, charged that the Government has been lax in investigating other Nazi cases. Now they say they are encouraged by the Government response although they have raised questions about the possible connection between suspects and the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies, a connection just disclosed in the case of Mr. Laipenieks.

The Government investigation of suspected war criminals has recently become the subject of numerous newspaper and magazine articles around the country. A forthcoming book entitled "Wanted: The Search for Nazis in America," by Howard Blum, a New York reporter, deals with the Government handling of the cases of four leading Nazi suspects.