



Canada admits letting in 2,000 Ukrainian SS troopers

BY **TOM TUGEND** | FEBRUARY 7, 1997

LOS ANGELES — The Canadian government, with British complicity, admitted more than 2,000 members of a notorious Ukrainian Waffen-SS division in 1950, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has charged.

In a related case, the CBS news program "60 Minutes" reported that about 1,000 SS men and Nazi collaborators, mainly from the Baltic states, moved to Canada about the same time.

And the German public broadcasting network reported that 50,000 war criminals receive "victim pensions" from the German government. German sources say 1,882 are Canadian residents.

Almost all the suspected war criminals and collaborators have lived openly under their own names in Canada for 47 years.

The Wiesenthal Center's dean, Rabbi Marvin Hier, and its Canadian representative, Sol Littman, addressed a news conference Monday after meeting with Canadian Solicitor General Herb Gray, who is in charge of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Gray "seemed genuinely disturbed by the material we presented and promised to investigate the charges," Hier said.

Littman, who has been researching Nazis in Canada since 1980, said the 14th Volunteer Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, aka the Galicia Division, largely comprised Ukrainians who served with Nazi police battalions and death squads.

The surviving 9,000 division members surrendered to the British at war's end, and were taken to England.

In 1950, Britain appealed to Commonwealth countries to admit them. Canada agreed to take 2,000, after being assured that their backgrounds had been checked and that they were cleared of complicity in war crimes.

But according to recently released British documents and interviews with officials who conducted the investigations, they were not screened, partly because none of the interrogators spoke their language, Littman said.

The 2,000 settled in major Canadian cities. About half are still alive.

One way of getting into postwar Canada "was by showing the SS tattoo," Canadian historian Irving Abella told "60 Minutes" interviewer Mike Wallace. "This proved that you were an anti-Communist."

He said that longtime Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau once told him his government did not pursue war criminals "because they were afraid of exacerbating relationships between Jews and Eastern European ethnic communities."

But John Sims, the Canadian official in charge of prosecuting war criminals, told "60 Minutes" that this "is going to be an important year, in which...considerable progress will be made in ridding this country of Nazis."

Recent reports of suspected war criminals living openly in Canada follow a November Jerusalem Post series calling Canada a "near-blissful refuge" for Nazis.

Steven Rambam, a New York private detective working with two Post reporters, located about 150 suspected war criminals in Canada, often by looking them up in phone books.

Masquerading as a professor from a fictitious American university, Rambam, a former member of the Jewish Defense League, secretly taped interviews with a former Lithuanian police chief who described in chilling detail his part in the execution of 5,000 Jews.

Meanwhile, the German TV program "Panorama" reported last week that 50,000 war criminals and members of army units who participated in atrocities were receiving monthly bonus pensions, ranging from hundreds to thousands.

The so-called "victim pensions" are added to the pensions of those who suffered World War II-linked disabilities, or to their dependents.

Although a 1950 German law excludes war criminals living abroad from getting such pensions, the law is apparently not enforced in Canada or the United States.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, has charged that some 3,300 Germans living in the United States receive the pensions.

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