War Crimes Suspect Can Return to Australia

By Jane Nelson

CANBERRA (Reuters) - Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said on Tuesday war crimes suspect Konrad Kalejs could return to Australia if deported from Britain and would not be prosecuted without new information.

Kalejs, 86, suspected of aiding the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Latvia during World War Two, has been deported from the United States and Canada because of his alleged involvement in war crimes.

Britain on Monday said it had no grounds for arresting Kalejs, but ordered him deported. Kalejs, who has always denied the war crimes charges, has the right to appeal.

"It's a question of law. He is an Australian citizen and any Australian citizen is entitled as a matter of law to return to Australia," Ruddock told Australian television on Tuesday.

Ruddock said the Australian government could not prosecute Kalejs, who moved from Australia to Britain last year, without new information. He called on people with evidence of Kalejs' alleged involvement in a Latvian death squad to come forward.

"If this issue is to be progressed, those people who believe that they have evidence that this man was involved in criminal activities in the war, they should bring their information forward and put it before the Australian Federal Police," Ruddock said.

"If it's new information, I'm sure they'd be willing to look at it," he said.

Jewish Community Outraged, Demand Changes

Australia's Jewish community was outraged that Kalejs would be allowed to again return, saying he was making a mockery of Australian citizenship because he was using it as an "insurance policy against justice."

"Australia has been built on migrants who once they become Australian citizens are regarded as the same as everyone else and the only way that we can maintain that as an important value is by saying we are not a place for fugitives," Executive Council of Australian Jewry vice-president Jeremy Jones told Reuters.
Jones called on the government to review Australia’s war crimes legislation so that evidence used in the United States of Kalejs’ alleged position in a Latvian killing squad would be enough to allow a prosecution here.

“I can’t understand why any government minister would want to tolerate a situation where he’s thrown out of other countries and he can come and live here,” Jones said.

“It seems that the Americans, the Germans, the Croatians, the Canadians, the British and the Argentinians can all manage to deal with this issue, but we haven’t been able to manage.”

Only three war crimes cases went to trial in Australia following the establishment of a special investigation unit in 1987. One was abandoned on medical grounds and the other two failed to secure a guilty verdict. The government’s special war crimes investigation unit was abandoned in 1992.

One of the obstacles to prosecuting war criminals in Australia was that retrospective legislation would need to be enacted. “It’s one of these issues that requires leadership from the very top,” Jones said.

Kalejs first settled in Australia in 1950, becoming a citizen in 1957. He was deported to Australia from the United States in 1994 and from Canada in 1997 because of his alleged war crimes.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center recently revealed Kalejs was living in a retirement home in central England after his departure from Australia last year.

The Nazi-hunting center says Kalejs was an officer in the wartime Arajas Commando unit, which it said collaborated with the Nazis in killing thousands of civilians, mostly Jews, in Latvia.

Kalejs is expected to leave Britain on Thursday

**Suspected Nazi war criminal to flee UK: report**

An alleged Nazi war criminal accused of taking part in the slaughter of thousands of Jews during World War II says he will leave Britain rather than face arrest, according to the Mail on Sunday. Konrad Kalejs, 86, of Latvian origin, is living in a luxurious retirement home in central England. But detectives are investigating claims that Kalejs was an officer with a Nazi death squad responsible for the murder of up to 30,000 Jews, communists and gypsies. In an interview with the Mail on Sunday, he claimed he had been “hounded” around the world. “I am leaving this country as soon as I can. I have learned my lesson. The police cannot hold me,” he insisted, and described his critics as "liars and storytellers." Home Secretary Jack Straw has already ordered an inquiry into how Kalejs obtained permission to enter Britain and take up residence here. Police have contacted Jerusalem’s Simon Wiesenthal Centre for evidence to back claims that Kalejs is a war criminal. He told the Mail on Sunday that he had used a false name, Viktor Kalnins, in order to secure his place in the home for Latvian war refugees. The Home Office has warned that it is powerless to prevent Kalejs fleeing the country. The newspaper said he intended to meet up with his wife in Australia, the only country he believes will not seek to bring him to trial. "Once again I am looking for a place where I can be with my wife away from these people who are hounding me. There's no peace for me here now," he said. "I've been hounded around the world now for 15 years and now I want to be left alone." Nazi hunters say Kalejs had emigrated to Australia after World War II posing as a refugee, but moved to the United States in 1959. He was deported in 1984, after details of his wartime past were revealed, and eventually went to Canada, but was forced to flee from there three years later after an inquiry implicated him in the running of a Nazi slave camp in Latvia. British-law allows people accused of war crimes to be put on trial even if the alleged offences took place outside Britain.-AFP

**Latvia PM says new facts needed for Kalejs trial**

01/04/00

RIGA, Jan 4 (Reuters) - Latvia's prime minister said on Tuesday that Konrad Kalejs, suspected of war crimes in Nazi-occupied Latvia during World War Two, should be put on trial if any new evidence against him surfaces.

The 86-year-old Kalejs has been staying in Britain, which on Monday ordered him deported to Australia. The Australian government says he can stay in the country as an Australian citizen and would not be prosecuted without new information.
Latvian Prime Minister Andris Shkele was quoted by Latvian Radio as saying: "Ongoing discussions about Kalejs are not enhancing Latvia's image. If there is enough evidence against Kalejs it has to be evaluated."

Shkele said later through his spokesman: "No doubt this case has to be seen to its logical end -- if there is enough new evidence, it should go to court."

Latvian prosecutors said last month they would reassess the evidence against Kalejs, who is suspected of aiding the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Latvia.

Britain was the third country to order the deportation of Kalejs after the United States and Canada because of his alleged involvement in war crimes. He has denied all such charges.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre has repeatedly called on Latvia to request his extradition so he could be put on trial in the former Soviet state.

However Latvian officials argue the current evidence on Kalejs, who Nazi hunters say was an officer in the notorious Arajs Commando, a Latvian police unit suspected of aiding wartime Nazi occupation forces kill thousands of civilians, is not enough to try him.

**Court Upholds Nazi Deportation**

*Updated 7:53 PM ET December 29, 1999*

*By JONATHAN POET, Associated Press Writer*

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - A federal appeals court Wednesday upheld the deportation of an 80-year-old man who served as a Nazi concentration camp guard during World War II.

Nikolaus Schiffer, a retired baker, was born in Philadelphia but raised in Romania. In 1941, he joined the Romanian army and later became part of the German Waffen SS, the elite branch of Hitler's army.

In 1958, Schiffer regained his U.S. citizenship by not disclosing details about his Nazi past that would have barred him from entering the country. He was stripped of his citizenship in 1993 and ordered deported to Romania in 1997.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision.

Calls to Schiffer's attorney were not returned.

Schiffer was an armed guard on labor details in the Sachsenhausen and Hersbruck concentration camps in Germany and the Majdanek camp and Trawniki SS training camp in Poland. He has said he knew nothing of the atrocities committed within the camps.

Eli Rosenbaum, director of the Justice Department's office of special investigations, said the agency has revoked the citizenship of 62 former Nazis and deported 53 people. Eighteen cases, including Schiffer's, are still in court, and the department is investigating 250 other suspected war criminals.

"All of these cases are important to send a message to the participants of such crimes in the future," Rosenbaum said. "It says that if you dare to involve yourself in such things, it is likely that the civilized world will pursue you even thousands of miles away from the scene of the crime and even decades later."

**Libel suit against U.S. historian puts the Holocaust itself on trial**
By Douglas Davis

LONDON, Jan. 3 (JTA) -

The Holocaust is scheduled to go on trial in a courtroom here next week. A leading Holocaust denier, David Irving, is suing a U.S. historian, Deborah Lipstadt, and her publisher for libel. The case is expected to produce the most detailed judicial inspection of the Holocaust since the trial of Nazi official Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961. The alleged libel appears in Lipstadt’s work, "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," published by Penguin Books in 1994. The trial, which is scheduled to last three months, is set to begin Jan. 11. Irving, a Brit who has acquired an international following, claims that Lipstadt attacked him personally and professionally, depicting him as an "Adolf Hitler partisan who wears blinkers and skews documents and misrepresents data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions, specifically those that exonerate Hitler.” He also alleges that Lipstadt and her publisher damaged his reputation when they claimed he has "misled academic historians” into "quoting historically invalid points contained in his writings and who applauds the internment of Jews in Nazi concentration camps." Irving’s thesis centers on his assertion that Hitler did not order the Holocaust, did not know of it and was not therefore responsible for it. Irving has also denied that Auschwitz was an extermination camp and claimed that the number of Jews who were killed had been grossly exaggerated. He says Lipstadt further tarnished his reputation by portraying him as "a dangerous spokesman for Holocaust-denial forces who deliberately and knowingly consorts and consorted with anti-Israel, anti-Semitic and Holocaust-denial forces." Lipstadt, who holds the Dorot Chair in Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, says her charges against Irving are "true in substance and in fact," according to depositions filed in the case. Lipstadt will argue at the trial that the 61-year-old Irving is driven by "his obsession with Hitler" and that he "distorts, manipulates and falsifies history in order to put Hitler in a more favorable light, thereby demonstrating a lack of detachment, rationality and judgment necessary for a historian." Lipstadt, who is being represented by Anthony Julius, a prominent London attorney who was the former lawyer for Princess Diana, has declined to be interviewed before the trial on the advice of her lawyer. But according to the court papers, she will also contend that Irving has "on numerous occasions denied the Holocaust, the deliberate, planned extermination of Europe’s Jewish population by the Nazis, and denied that gas chambers were used by the Nazis as a means of carrying out that extermination.” She will charge that Irving "holds extremist views and has allied himself with others who hold such views," including Robert Faurisson, who was convicted by a French court of denying the Holocaust, and Ernst Zundel, the Canadian author of "The Hitler We Loved," which concludes that Hitler’s spirit "soars beyond the shores of the white man’s home in Europe." Irving, who lives in London, himself has disputed the number of Jews who died in concentration camps, suggesting that most deaths were the result of natural causes, and that crematoria and other buildings at concentration camp sites were constructed after World War II. On one occasion, he declared that "about 100,000 people died in Auschwitz in three years" and that "if we must assume generously that a quarter of them were murdered, then we must remember that the British killed 50,000 Germans in one night when they raided Hamburg." On another occasion, he asserted bluntly, "Auschwitz was not an extermination camp and the Holocaust was a propaganda hoax by the British." Irving’s theories, propounded to an audience of about 800 people in a German restaurant in 1990, led to his conviction in the Munich District Court on charges of defaming and denigrating the memory of the dead. In his restaurant speech, Irving is reported to have said, "We now believe that, just as the gas chambers which the Americans built here in Dachau in the days following the end of the war were a sham, the gas chambers which can now be seen by tourists in Auschwitz were built by the authorities in Poland following the Second World War." In January 1994, a German appeals court not only upheld the conviction, but increased Irving’s fine from $30,000 to $50,000. The German court held that "anyone denying the gassing and murder of Jews in the Third Reich defames every Jew and slanders the memory of all Jews gassed in Auschwitz." More recently, in response to a challenge from a London school teacher last July about Holocaust survivor testimony, Irving said that of the testimony he has read that "many of the more prominent ones appear to be concocted by congenital liars." Irving is now persona non grata in Germany, Austria, Italy, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, where he had been in frequent demand as a lecturer. According to Efraim Zuroff, the director of the Israel office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the
upcoming London case marks the "second stage of Holocaust trials."
"If, in the past, we have been dealing with
the perpetrators of the Holocaust," he told JTA, "we are now dealing with challenges to the historical record."

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Tuesday, Jan 4, 2000 Sun-Thu at 18:00 (GMT+2)

Arena Album

By Arena staff

Before we chose the person whose handprint affected the past two years the most, we had to ask from what pool to
choose. Should we choose Bill Gates and side with conformity, or should we try to choose the person who contributed
more than any one else to the uniqueness of the content we present?

As hinted by the headline we chose the second option. Itamar Levin, a "Globes" correspondent, is the man who revealed
the Swiss Holocaust Deposits Affair to the world. At first, he encountered sneers. He was told that he shouldn't waste his
time trying to get this ball rolling.

But the ball rolled and roll it did. What began as doubt concerning Swiss neutrality during World War II, spread out across
Europe and gathered speed in the US Senate.

At some point, the story became far more than simple human curiosity. The Holocaust Deposits Affair became the story of
a struggle. The Jews and the State of Israel vs. the European nations' dark past. Today, the Swiss have agreed to
compensate relatives of Holocaust victims to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars and there is hope that the rest of
Europe will follow in their footsteps. The battle is far from over, or even from the point when the Jewish organizations can
take a breather, but new progress is reported nearly every week.

The Arena has many more complimentary things to say about Mr. Levin, but maybe we should invite someone else to the
podium: Mr. Gregg Rickman, US Senate Banking Committee chair Alfonse D'Amato's legislative director and chief
investigator of the Swiss Deposits Affair, who sent us the following e-mail, after finding his own name listed in our list of
"Who's Who in the Swiss Banks Affair".

I was honored to have made your list of the Who's Who in the Swiss Bank Affair. I must state that Itamar Levin, with
whom I have worked for some time, has been very important to this investigation and has even provided me with a
great deal of help. It is only right that he has been commended for his writing in this ongoing story. There is more work
to be done, and I am sure that Itamar will continue to contribute. Thank you.

Sweden Urged to Admit Links to Nazi Germany

Updated 9:32 AM ET January 4, 2000

By Belinda Goldsmith

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - A leading Swedish politician called on Tuesday for Sweden to own up to its links to
Nazi Germany and the Holocaust as a television documentary revealed at least 260 Swedes were members of
Hitler's elite Waffen SS.

Alf Svensson, leader of the opposition Christian Democratic Party, said Prime Minister Goran Persson needed
to take measures fast to address this before Sweden hosted an international conference on the Holocaust on

"Before the conference Goran Persson must clearly state that Sweden will deal with this," Svensson told a news
conference, suggesting some form of historical commission be set up.
Sweden's neutral stance during World War II has come under scrutiny in recent years as details emerged that it sold iron ore to Germany during the war and let German troops cross its territory into Finland and Norway so as not to upset Berlin.

But revelations this week that between 260 and 500 Swedes were members of the SS, which played a central role in Nazi attempts to exterminate European Jews, has raised further concerns about Sweden's past.

One of the Swedes was a guard at the concentration camp Treblinka in Poland where 850,000 Jews were gassed. Forty-two of the Swedes are still alive, most living in Sweden.

The details emerged in a three-part television documentary, called "Swedes Who Fought For Hitler," aired on Monday and based on a book by journalist Bosse Schon that took 18 years to research.

NEO-NAZI VIOLENCE ON THE RISE

Images of marching SS troops, Hitler and concentration camp trains were interspersed with modern-day footage of neo-Nazi demonstrations in Sweden, where there is rising concern about increasing racist and neo-Nazi violence.

Police said three men, known Nazi sympathizers, were due in a Stockholm court on Tuesday over the murder of a 19-year-old man of Turkish origin last Friday. One of them painted a swastika in blood on his cell door while awaiting the hearing.

Svensson said he was concerned the Holocaust conference, being attended by about 400 delegates from 45 countries, would be overshadowed by questions about Sweden's links to Nazi Germany and why Sweden had not changed its laws to bring war criminals before the courts like other countries.

"Internationally people are very surprised that Sweden has not cleaned up its own doorstep. We expect other countries to do that," said Svensson, whose espousal of moral values helped his party to a strong showing in Sweden's 1998 election.

"We note and disassociate ourselves from neo-Nazis but we must also deal with the swamps where these ideas fermented."

Svensson said a commission could take evidence from the people who were involved with the Nazis during the war, several of whom appeared in the television documentary.

Arvid Johansson, 85, confessed he was a soldier in Hitler's Waffen SS. It was illegal to sign up to the German army in Sweden but people could travel to neighboring occupied countries or Germany to enlist.

"I have come out with this to clear the names of those of us who were not Nazis but were lured into this," Johansson said. "We thought we were going to Finland to fight the Russians."

Harald Sundin, 79, was a guard on the trains to a concentration camps and also on two execution patrols.

"But I don't think I ever killed anyone," said Sundin.

"Germany was the ideal country for many Swedes including for me. Hitler promised to give us a pure breed-free Europe and we swallowed the lies and propaganda without question.

"But I can't understand how young people can be Nazis today. I just want to say to them: Read history, read what happened."
WE'VE ALL READ as much as we can stand lately about the century just ended, about the high points and about the dark moments that are likely to endure as bitter monuments to human perversity. But if those dark times are to remain real, frightening and cautionary to those who had the good fortune not to experience them, a significant part of the reason will be the stories told not just in history books but in public museums. And in this city in particular, a big measure of credit will belong to Jeshajahu Weinberg, founding director of this city’s Holocaust Memorial Museum, who died Jan. 1 at age 81.

"Shaike" Weinberg, as he was widely known, was a shaper of public memory, not primarily as a historian or eyewitness but as a brilliant designer of museum exhibitions--here in Washington, where the museum that opened in 1993 has had a cathartic, nearly explosive effect, and also in Israel and more recently in Berlin and Warsaw, both now struggling to build museums that confront that same difficult past.

With the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum still drawing record crowds seven years after it opened, it's easy to forget how improbable the project once seemed to many, even the sympathetic. How would this narrative of European atrocity fit on America's Mall? Would the destruction of European Jewry hold out lessons for a wider public? In the end, the museum conveyed its message, not didactically but with unmissable clarity: Citizens everywhere have responsibilities to stand against evil and to bear witness.

For Mr. Weinberg, his colleagues say, everything came down to that clarity--the vivid, understandable telling of the tale in word and image. It may have been a legacy of his first career as a theater director; it may have been his legendary decisiveness, which meant these potentially touchiest of projects were not only launched but, against all odds, completed. It was surely those qualities--the clarity, the certainty--that drew museum planners in Germany and Poland to seek out his guidance, which he was still giving at his death.

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Happy New Year to all. I'll bring you the daily news while Stu is away. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to e-mail me.

--Katherine

General News

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An Unclean Slate as Century Begins

New Chair for Israel's Yad Vashem

Updated 5:43 PM ET January 2, 2000

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak Speaks to the Press... (AP)

JERUSALEM (AP) - Israel's Holocaust memorial named a former parliament speaker as the chairman of its international board on Sunday. Shevah Weiss, 64, replaces Joseph Burg, who died in October, as head of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial's advisory board that meets once a year. Weiss served as lawmaker for 18 years, including seven as the deputy chairman of the parliament and four as speaker. Weiss was born in Poland and survived the Holocaust to immigrate to Israel in 1947. He was a political science professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University for many years and represented the ruling Labor party in parliament until last year. Weiss fought unsuccessfully in 1998 against the lifting of an informal Israeli ban on the music of Richard Wagner, Adolf Hitler's favorite composer, whose songs were often played at Nazi rallies and in death camps. Israeli radio stations now play Wagner's music, although it is never performed publicly in the country.

UK Asked to Prosecute or Expel War Crimes Suspect

Updated 6:53 AM ET December 28, 1999

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain has been asked to prosecute or expel a suspected Nazi war criminal said to have slipped unnoticed into the country.

Nazi hunters from the Simon Wiesenthal Center say Konrad Kalejs, now 86, is implicated in the murder of
30,000 Jews at a death camp in Latvia in World War Two.

He is alleged to have been an officer in the Latvian Auxiliary Security Police, known as the Arajs Commando. "We are talking about a very, very bad man who should be brought to justice," said Dr. Efraim Zuroff, director of the center's Israel office.

He said their investigators had tracked Kalejs down to Britain two weeks ago.

"He has been deported from America and Canada for his war crimes and we do not think that the people of Great Britain would welcome him," Zuroff said.

Kalejs, now believed to be living in the Rugby area in central England, has always denied the accusations and claimed he was a student during the war.

A spokeswoman for Britain’s Home Office said Tuesday the immigration service would look very closely at the allegations "and co-operate closely with police if that became appropriate."

Lord Janner, a prominent campaigner for Holocaust victims, said that Kalejs, who originally moved to Australia after the war, should be prosecuted under war crimes legislation.

Britain to Deport War Crimes Suspect to Australia

Updated 8:52 AM ET January 3, 2000
By Paul Majendie

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain Monday told an 86-year-old man suspected of aiding the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Latvia that he was being deported to Australia, which has already decided not to prosecute him.

British police said they had no grounds for arresting Konrad Kalejs, currently staying in an old people’s home in central England.

Home Secretary Jack Straw said he was "minded to deport him to Australia on the grounds that his exclusion from the UK would be conducive to the public good."

"He has been invited to submit any representations he may have so these may be considered before a final decision is made," he added in a statement.

The decision was a bitter blow to Nazi hunters. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem, which pursues perpetrators of the Holocaust, said this was "a missed opportunity."

Kalejs had already said he planned to leave Britain after being discovered here two weeks ago.

"I am leaving this country as soon as I can," Kalejs told the Mail Sunday newspaper before the deportation notice was officially served on him by Britain’s interior ministry.

"I have learned my lesson. The police cannot hold me," he said.

Kalejs is alleged to have been an officer in the wartime Arajs Commando, which Nazi hunters say collaborated with the Nazis in the murder of thousands of civilians in Latvia, most of them Jews.

NAZI HUNTERS DISAPPOINTED

Kalejs has always denied the accusations.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, which traced Kalejs to Britain and had urged the British government to act, deplored London’s decision.
"We are deeply disappointed that an opportunity to prosecute Kalejs either in Britain or in Latvia was squandered."

"Given the enormity of his crimes and the fact that crimes against humanity have no statute of limitations, I believe a way could have been found to prosecute him in Britain."

"I think that Kalejs's deportation from a third country reinforces the lack of political will in Canberra to prosecute this terrible Nazi war criminal and it underscores Australia's total failure to deal with this issue."

The center says Kalejs has already been deported from the United States and Canada for war crimes. He has been told he is free to enter Australia where he has citizenship.

Latvia's Foreign Minister said he may seek the extradition of Kalejs from Britain if its prosecutor general's office could present solid evidence that he was involved in Nazi war crimes.

Kalejs said he was tired of being "hounded around the world for 15 years" and wants to meet up with his wife in Australia.

"Once again, I am looking for a place where I can be with my wife away from these people who are hounding me," said Kalejs, who was interviewed by the newspaper at a retirement home. "There's no peace for me here now."

http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20000103/wl/obit_weinberg_1.html
Monday January 3 8:36 AM ET

**Holocaust Museum Director Dies** *By DINA KRAFT Associated Press Writer*

JERUSALEM (AP) - Jeshajahu Weinberg, a founding director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington who used his dramatic talents to tell the story of European Jewry, died of a stroke in Tel Aviv, an associate said Monday. He was 81. Weinberg's creative vision is credited with giving visitors to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington a glimpse of the reality in Nazi camps and Jewish ghettos in Europe during World War II. On display are more than 30,000 artifacts, including a railroad car used to transport Jews to camps.

Weinberg died Saturday in Tel Aviv, said Asia Reuven, spokeswoman of the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv. Weinberg was a founding director of the Tel Aviv museum and came out of retirement in the early 1990s to help establish the Holocaust Museum in Washington, which opened six years ago and has had 12 million visitors. Born in Warsaw and educated in Germany, Weinberg - who was usually called "Shaike," an abbreviation of his first name - immigrated with his family to Palestine in 1933, settling on a kibbutz, a communal farm. His innovative work in the Tel Aviv and Washington museums helped earn him the 1999 Israel Prize for lifetime achievement, the most prestigious award the Jewish State bestows on its citizens. Anita Shapira, a professor of Jewish history at Tel Aviv University who worked closely with Weinberg, said he changed the face of history museums. "He introduced the concept of the museum as a tool for telling a story, not just for showing authentic artifacts," Shapira said. In 1939, Weinberg established Kibbutz Elon along with fellow members of his Marxist-Zionist youth movement. According to friends, he retained his ardent socialist beliefs throughout his life. From 1942-1946 he volunteered for service in the British Army's Jewish Brigade, and served part of that time in Italy. He served as deputy director in the office mechanization center of the prime minister's office from 1956-1961 before becoming director of the Cameri Theater, Tel Aviv's municipal theater, a post he held until 1976. Most recently, he was a consultant to the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Jewish Museum of Warsaw. Weinberg is survived by a son and three daughters. He was buried Monday at Kibbutz Afek in northern Israel, alongside his wife.
The Man Who Never Forgot
Shaike Weinberg, Holocaust Chronicler

By Judith Weinraub
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, January 3, 2000; Page C01

When Shaike Weinberg was 14, he had an encounter with authority that changed the course of his life. The second son of a Polish Jewish family living in Berlin, he'd been told not to wear his Zionist Youth badge to school. But, ever the rational thinker, when he saw some of his fellow students wearing emblems of the Nazi Party, which had just come to power, he complained to his teacher. Why can they wear political symbols when I can't wear mine?

Later that day, his teacher advised Weinberg's older brother that he couldn't guarantee Shaike's safety. His brother immediately told their parents, and the next morning Shaike and his father were on a train to Warsaw, where the family still had relatives, friends and property. His mother was left behind to pack up their extensive library. Within the year, the family resettled in Palestine.

The anecdote, with slight variations on the embellishments, is one that all of Weinberg's friends know--and it's a great story. But the episode is also a metaphor for his life, a life that had little use for the unreasoning dictates of authority. Not that he was a particularly rebellious man, but if he could see a better way--and he usually did--why not choose that direction?

A master storyteller, Jeshajahu "Shaike" Weinberg lived a life that embodied much of the drama of the Jewish experience in the 20th century: A childhood under the influence of the Nazis in Germany and Poland. The Zionist movement and the European exodus to Palestine. The beginning of the kibbutz movement. The growth of urban Israel. American citizenship. And finally, a return to Israel to be near two of his children and close family friends.

His great gift was the ability to share the larger framework of those stories through three astonishing works of art: the permanent exhibitions at Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv; the Museum of the History of Jerusalem in that city; and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Those last two were undertaken and completed after his first and second attempts to retire, and while he was experiencing his first problems with heart ailments.

By the time he died last Saturday morning in Tel Aviv, his friends and family had given up attempts to get him to really retire. He was still, at 81, actively at work as both the chairman of the design team of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw and as a consultant for the design and construction of the permanent exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Despite his much less than perfect health, he traveled to Europe at least once a month to monitor both projects.

He was in Berlin this past September when he collapsed on the 19th--Yom Kippur morning. He'd gone there as usual for a meeting, but this time he had only recently emerged from the hospital during a 10-week siege of vasculitis, and his friends had begged him not to go. He wouldn't hear of it. He had taken on the job of advising the museum, and nothing was going to stop him from making sure they got it right.

He had led the way by getting it right at his own institutions, where he created a storytelling model that defied museum conventions. No dioramas. No static panels. Instead, he used video monitors, soundtracks, photographs, artifacts, film, architectural models, lighting for special effect, all assembled in a manner that evoked worlds gone by. Even the text blocks and captions were honed for maximum impact rather than
maximum information.

Working on intuition, he ignored the rules of exhibitions that most museums adhered to--in part because he didn't have the disadvantage of a formal education or the professional training that taught those rules. (How he had the unhesitating nerve to go from working on a kibbutz to becoming an early data-processing expert for the Israeli government to becoming the director of the Municipal Theater of Tel Aviv to leading his museums--with time off for fighting in World War II as a member of the Jewish Brigade of the British army and two marriages is another story.)

It was in that iconoclastic spirit that he evidenced a little competitive tension with the other great groundbreaking artist at the Holocaust museum, architect James L. Freed. Weinberg was proud of his work there, and though he never admitted concern that praise for Freed's work would eclipse his own achievement, his close friends could sense the tension.

He was not, however, competitive with the people who worked for him. He knew their strengths and weaknesses, supported the former, and hoped that they would prevail. If not, well, you could take other people only so far. We are all responsible, he knew, for our own choices.

He regretted some of his own, and talked openly of what he saw as his and his wife's shortcomings as parents. They had spent too much time on their careers, he said. It was hard on their children, Mei'ya, Michal, Ruthie and Na'aman.

Perhaps that was part of the reason for his extraordinary generosity to family members and friends, offering his ear and great intelligence to those who sought it out; paying for books, CDs, meals, movies, you name it--to share the pleasures of life he'd discovered. (That was why we all knew about the books of Jose Saramago long before the Portuguese writer won the Nobel Prize for Literature last year. Shaike had bought us copies of Saramago's books, told us to read them, and we did.)

Although certainly not all, many of the recipients of these gifts were women--motherly women, intelligent women, pretty women, strong women. He was at home with all of us. He seemed to need us to fill the vacuum left after the death of his beloved wife, Hanna, an American whose job in Washington in the late 1980s brought Weinberg here, much to the delight of the members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council who were trying to get their museum built and sought his guidance. In 1989 they persuaded him to come out of retirement once more and accept the directorship of the museum, a position he held until 1995, when he returned to Israel.

But he missed his American friends (and his favorite bookstores) and found ways to visit us and reasons for us to meet him in other cities whenever he could. There was the great adventure of his 80th-birthday celebration two summers ago in Cyprus, when the guests' ages ranged from 23 to 80. (Why Cyprus? Because he hadn't been there.) And a trip to New York last summer when a few of his Washington friends went up to see him, all on a carefully orchestrated schedule so that he could spend private time with each of us.

It was on one of those very hot early July days that I got to see him. I was alarmed that he seemed more frail than usual, and as we crossed First Avenue in the blinding sun to go to a restaurant, I got the courage to ask him, "Shaike, do you check with your cardiologist before making these trips?" "No," he said with a shrug. "What's the point? It will happen when it happens."

Well, it has happened, and despite his extraordinary legacy, we are all the poorer.

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Saturday January 1 9:20 PM ET
Nuremberg Lawyer Dies at Age 85

BOSTON (AP) - Thomas Francis Lambert Jr., who prosecuted Nazi war criminals as a trial lawyer for the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, died at his Boston home Wednesday after a long bout with Parkinson's Disease. He was 85.

During the post-World War II Nuremberg trials, Lambert helped prepare the case against the Nazi Party that accused it of being a criminal organization. He also helped to prosecute Martin Bormann, one of Hitler's closest aides.

Bormann, tried in absentia, was found guilty and condemned to death. He was never found, and a skeleton unearthed in Berlin in 1972 was determined with near certainty to be his.

Lambert was asked to join the team of American prosecutors at the principal Nuremberg Trial by Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, who led the team.

Lambert was born in Detroit and graduated from Oxford University. He attended Yale Law School as a Sterling Fellow, and, at age 26, became dean of Stetson University College of Law in De Land, Fla. The college later moved to St. Petersburg, Fla.

Lambert also taught at Boston University School of Law for nine years and at Suffolk University Law School in Boston for 27 years until May when he retired.

"He was truly one of the giants of the legal profession and a mentor and inspiration to most of the country's great trial lawyers," Suffolk University President David J. Sargent said.

Lambert had a long association with the American Trial Lawyers Association, and spent 40 years overseeing the group's law journal and other publications.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Brannon Lambert; a brother, Owen Lambert; and a sister, Margaret Teagle.

PG TIMES

Obituary: Hans Frankenthal, Holocaust survivor led effort against German firms

Friday, December 31, 1999

By Sally Kalson, Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Hans Frankenthal, a Holocaust survivor who returned to Germany after the war and later emerged as a leader of the effort to force German companies to compensate former slave laborers and victims of medical experiments, was memorialized Wednesday in his home city of Dortmund, Germany. He died Dec. 22 after a short, unspecified illness.

Mr. Frankenthal, 73, visited Pittsburgh in November to speak about his efforts to get Bayer AG, a forerunner and descendent of the German conglomerate I.G. Farben, to recognize the claims of aging slave laborers by paying into a joint compensation fund with other German companies that used them under the Nazis.

A former slave laborer at I.G. Farben and a victim of medical experimentation at Auschwitz, Mr. Frankenthal accused German companies of dragging their feet in hopes that the remaining survivors would die off, providing a "biological solution" to their dilemma.
Mr. Frankenthal lived long enough to see a $5.1 billion compensation fund agreed upon in principle; but died too soon to collect a penny.

Born in 1926 in a small town where his family was in the cattle business, Mr. Frankenthal and his brother, Ernst, survived nearly two years as slave laborers.

Many Jews who survived the war wanted nothing more to do with Germany, but Mr. Frankenthal took the unusual step of returning to pick up the pieces. He retired from the cattle and butchery business and took up the cause of the former laborers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. In 1996, he tried to make his case at Bayer AG's annual stockholders meeting but was turned away.

Just a few months ago, he published his memoirs in German, and spoke about them in November at Barnes and Noble in Squirrel Hill.

Mr. Frankenthal was a member of the steering committee of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, as well as a board member of the Auschwitz Committee of the Federal Republic, the International Auschwitz Committee and the National Federation for Information and Assistance to Nazi Persecutees.

Pittsburghers who met Mr. Frankenthal during his visit are planning a memorial event, to be announced.

**Quarrel Over Jewish Widow's Estate**

*Updated 8:44 PM ET December 29, 1999*

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) - Several Jewish organizations are fighting a legal battle with the widow of a multimillionaire over how much of his estate they should get. The Holocaust Museum in Washington and a Jerusalem hospital are among those claiming they were promised more than $40 million in contributions from the estate of Erwin Herling, an international businessman and Holocaust survivor. Herling's widow, Tova Leidesdorf Herling, 64, claims the only assets in her husband's Florida estate are a car and a penthouse condo worth about $100,000. The estate faces eight lawsuits filed during the past week in Miami-Dade Circuit Court. "There's evidence he was a wealthy man who lived a very affluent lifestyle," said Melvyn Weiss, an attorney for the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. "It's very suspicious she is not listing any assets in the estate. She may have surreptitiously put them elsewhere." Herling, 78, revised his will and named his wife as his sole beneficiary three days before he died last year in Miami Beach. The revised will, which states Herling was a resident of London and a citizen of Brazil, was filed in July in Miami.

**Generalii Pays Israeli Daughter of Holocaust Victim NIS 600,000**

*By Itamar Levin*

An 88-year-old Israeli citizen has received a NIS 600,000 payment from Generali Insurance company in respect of a life assurance policy taken out by her father. The father perished in Auschwitz and the daughter, living in northern Israel, is his sole heiress.

The money was paid through the "Generalli fund" headed by Judge (emeritus) Dov Levin. The $12 million fund was set up under an agreement between the company and the Knesset Finance Committee. It has so far paid out NIS 4 million to the heirs of Holocaust victims in respect of policies taken out before the Holocaust in Eastern and Central Europe. In addition, aid has been granted to hundreds of survivors on a humanitarian basis.

The instance reported yesterday involved the largest payment to date. In the fund's estimation, the average real value of
Holocaust era policies is some tens of thousands of dollars. Levin said some months ago that in his opinion, the amount available to the fund should be increased, and he believes Generali will accede in this request.

Published by Israel's Business Arena December 30, 1999

A Holocaust survivor beats revisionists
Orange County Register
January 3, 2000
Mel Mermelstein, 71, of Huntington Beach, started the Auschwitz Study Foundation and Holocaust Memorial in 1967, two decades before winning a series of lawsuits against a Costa-Mesa revisionist hate group. The Institute for Historical Review made a public offer of $50,000 for proof that Jews were killed in gas chambers. Mermelstein, a Holocaust survivor, decried the offer in letters to several newspapers. Referring to his published letters, the group wrote Mermelstein demanding that he prove the existence of gas chambers. But the group resisted his challenges - setting off a 12-year legal battle that Mermelstein says he fought on behalf of all Holocaust survivors. So they went ahead and said if I did not come forth and prove that gas chambers were used they would expose me to the mass media. To whom were they using such language - the guy who lost his mother and two sisters in the gas chambers and whose brother was shot in a death march? I didn’t dignify them with a response. I got a lawyer to respond on my behalf. It wasn’t easy. There wasn’t a Jewish lawyer who wanted to get involved in that. I was 17 when I was put in the camps. Czechoslovakia was conquered by Hungarian fascists who rounded us up and handed us to the Nazis. I was in Auschwitz and Buchenwald for a year, then on a three-week death march that began Jan. 18, 1945. Out of 2,000 prisoners, no more than 300 survived. Most of us were driven out in the snow and shot. So that’s what the death march was all about. I was in Buchenwald during the liberation. I had contracted typhus after the death march, and they transferred me to the death section. I wasn’t supposed to survive, but I did. I had never been approached by (a revisionist group), but after that I wouldn’t let go. The judge said, at the end of the hearing, "This court takes judicial notice of the fact that Jews were gassed to death at Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland during the summer of 1944." And before he dropped the gavel, he said: "It is simply a fact." It’s adjudicated now. I shivered. My spine, I felt a shiver. I cried, actually. (The lawsuit) brought up bad memories for me, but I have to do what I have to do. They’re not going to beat me down. It doesn’t work like that. They didn’t succeed. CONCLUSION: In 1985, a Los Angeles Superior Court judge awarded Mermelstein $90,000 and ordered the Institute for Historical Review to formally apologize to all Auschwitz survivors. Mermelstein’s tribulations were the basis of a 1991 television miniseries called "Never Forget." And he wrote a book about his Holocaust experiences in 1981 titled, "By Bread Alone." - As told to Mayrav Saar of The Orange County Register

Nazi Ghosts Exorcised, Berlin Light Show to Go on
Updated 9:43 AM ET December 30, 1999
By Adam Tanner
BERLIN (Reuters) - After weeks of heated arguments, organizers of Berlin’s massive millennium light show have exorcised the ghosts of the Nazi past and are ready to go ahead with a new politically correct show on New Year’s Eve.

Organizers of the exhibition -- a high-voltage concentration of 250 floodlights that can sent their beam 18 miles into the midnight sky -- said Thursday the show would go on.

"Everything is ready now," Anette Guthmann, a spokeswoman for Art in Heaven, the firm organizing the light show, said. "Nobody has done this before."

Just a few weeks ago the fate of the show, the centerpiece of Germany’s millennium celebrations, was cast into doubt when city officials and civic groups complained that the massive use of floodlights recalled the specter of Nazi rallies.
According to the original concept, the floodlights would have created a white "house of light" around the Victory Column which celebrates Germany's 1871 military defeat of France. Other lights would flood the Goddess of Victory atop the monument in a central blaze of energy.

**STRIKING, BUT TOO NAZI**

But city officials jumped in and vetoed the idea.

"The city knew that this would be seen across the world so one has to be very careful," said Petra Reetz, a spokeswoman for Berlin's development department which oversaw the planning.

"It was a very striking aesthetic, but unfortunately it had these Nazi parallels."

Local newspapers reprinted photos of Albert Speer's use of floodlights pointing to the heavens in 1930s Nazi rallies, and complaints grew. Even Speer's son entered the debate to argue that the show should go on.

"My father's idea to use floodlights and to hold the party rally at night was one of his best ideas because it covered up the ugliness of the Nazi moguls marching there," Albert Speer told the Tagesspiegel newspaper.

Adding to the Nazi echoes was the location itself along the avenue running between the Brandenburg Gate and Victory Column cutting through the central Tiergarten park.

This boulevard was to have been the main East-West axis of Hitler's new capital, Germania. It was here that he celebrated his 50th birthday in 1938 with a huge military parade.

**BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD**

Designers went back to the drawing board, adding color to the lights to avoid the stark white the Nazis favored. They shifted the focus from stark upward lines around the Victory Column into criss-crossing beams of light.

The changes convinced the city government which gave their go-ahead just before Christmas. Thursday organizers made final adjustments and planned a final dress rehearsal.

The millennium light show will consume 3.8 million watts -- the equivalent of more than 60,000 household 60-watt bulbs.

"Our floodlights will shine 30 kilometers into the heavens," Art in Heaven producer Achim Perleberg said. "No one has ever seen such a concentrated use of light."

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**An Unclean Slate as Century Begins**

WASHINGTON (AP) - Generations down the road, the hunt goes on for Nazi treasure. America's treatment of citizens of Italian descent in World War II is coming under new scrutiny. The Rwandan genocide, a more recent horror, eats at the world's conscience. The new century has some unfinished business with the old one.

Atonement for sins of the past - often the distant past - is far from complete. In just one example, a U.S. commission searching for Nazi assets in the United States has been given until the end of 2000, an extra year, to complete its work and propose ways to "do justice." Even so, President Clinton says the world starts "a new millennium on higher ground" now that a deal has been reached to pay forced and enslaved laborers of the Third Reich - one of the final broad categories of claims to be resolved from the war against Germany. If this is higher ground, it affords a panoramic view of all that is left undone. There's been an expression of "deep
remorse” from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, but no official U.N. apology, for not acting to stop the slaughter of 800,000 in Rwanda in 1994. Also, an acknowledgment by Japan, but no compensation or apology, for the women coerced into prostitution for the Imperial Army in Asian brothels. More than 1 million Korean War documents are being reviewed in government investigations launched on the strength of reports by The Associated Press that American soldiers killed hundreds of South Korean citizens at the hamlet of No Gun Ri during the war. The process of redressing old wrongs has proceeded under different names, none quite right. In modern psycho-parlance, the idea is to achieve “closure.” In postwar West Germany, the term was “wiedergutmachung” - making good again - as one of the first forms of compensation to Nazi victims was called. Holocaust survivors rejected the label, reasoning that what Jews went through can’t be made good. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright put it: “We strive then not for perfect justice which is beyond our power, but rather for the best possible justice which is within our power to achieve.” Sometimes, atonement consists largely of facing up to what went on in the past. “Unless we look the beast in the eye, we find that it has an uncanny habit of returning and holding us hostage,” says Archbishop Desmond Tutu, head of South Africa’s pioneering truth and reconciliation commission, which expects to deal with final amnesty requests by June. These days the atoners are often diplomats and accountants - the people negotiating the deals and tallying up claims and assets, such as the 10,817,021 ounces of Nazi monetary gold recovered by a reparations commission before its dissolution in 1998 after 52 years of work. The timepiece they are watching is not the clock that ticked toward the new century, but the calendar marking the march of years and the passing of the aggrieved generations. “It truly is a race against time,” said Delissa Ridgway, chief of the Justice Department division that oversees Americans’ claims against other governments. “We know that people are dying.” It is also a race for younger generations, those wanting to look ahead. In Guatemala, the Commission for Historical Clarification has reported with brutal precision on the 42,000 deaths it investigated from a 36-year civil war, finding the army responsible for 93 percent of them. Often, a full accounting is the first step in reconciliation, sometimes the only step. Tutu, in speeches and a new book, recommends South Africa’s brand of measured forgiveness, “abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin.” In the United States, most of the 80,000 Japanese-Americans who applied for compensation from World War II internment camps were paid $20,000 each. But Latin Americans of Japanese descent say not enough money has been set aside to make good on a 1998 offer of $5,000 to those who were confined in the United States in the war. Atonement remains incomplete, if even begun, for other wounds. -Under a new California law allowing victims of slave labor to sue multinationals in state courts, a survivor of the Bataan Death March last year sued a Japanese company that he said forced him to work in an unsafe mine as a prisoner of war in Japan. -Legislation passed in the House and introduced in the Senate would direct the government to detail injustices against Italian-Americans in World War II. Sponsors say thousands were subjected to curfews, relocated away from military installations or confined. Hong Won-ki, a South Korean who says he lost his parents in a U.S. air attack in 1951, had a different way of describing the closure he seeks: “We need to console those souls who still wander because the truth about their unjust death was not told.”
Germany Funds Auschwitz Museum

Epilogue to a story of Nazi-Looted Books

Suspected War Criminal Konrad Kalejs (4)

Search on for Second Alleged Nazi

January 4, 2000

Germany Funds Auschwitz Museum

Filed at 3:16 p.m. EST

By The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) -- Germany has pledged $5 million for the upkeep of the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum, located on the site of the former Nazi death camp in Poland, a spokesman said Tuesday.

Part of the money will also be used for exhibits at the museum, which commemorates some 1.5 million people -- mostly Jews -- who perished at Auschwitz in 1940-45.

About $1.8 million will fund a five-year restoration of 3,600 concrete posts and camp walls starting this spring, museum spokesman Jaroslaw Mensfelt told the Polish news agency PAP.

He said the museum signed the agreement with Germany's states in December.

Located near the southern city of Oswiecim, the museum draw about 500,000 visitors a year.

Epilogue to a Story of Nazi-Looted Books

Library of Congress Trove of War Propaganda Included Many Stolen Jewish Works

By Michael Dobbs
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, January 5, 2000; Page C01

For the Library of Congress representatives assigned to U.S. military intelligence at the end of World War II, it was the most exciting adventure of their lives, the closest they would come to actual combat. They were men with a mission: to scour occupied Germany for Nazi propaganda and fill in the gaps of the great American book
After years spent cataloguing books and toiling in musty archives, the American librarians suddenly found themselves interrogating Nazi book collectors and confiscating enemy literature. Wearing military uniforms and serving as part of the occupying force, the dozen or so men of the Library of Congress Mission to Europe managed to ship nearly 1 million books back to Washington in a little over a year.

But now--more than half a century later--the U.S. Army captain who handed over confiscated Nazi materials to the mission says it is "undeniable" that some of the books that ended up in Washington were not mere Nazi propaganda. Rather, they had been looted from Jewish homes, libraries or synagogues by the Nazis. In recent weeks, investigators from the Department of Justice, a presidential commission on Holocaust-era assets and half a dozen private researchers have been grappling with the unsettling notion that these books are sitting unacknowledged on the shelves of the Library of Congress and other American libraries.

"The problem was that the Nazis screwed up all of Europe," says Seymour Pomrenze, a former U.S. government archivist who was in charge of a U.S. Army unit that tried to restore looted books to their communities after the war. "In some cases, when the books were marked, that was fine. We gave them back to the country [of origin]. But this was often not the case." He adds that it was "logistically impossible" to examine every crate shipped to Washington for evidence of Jewish loot.

The disputed books were part of the "working library" of a Nazi institute engaged in pseudo-scientific research into the "Jewish problem" that was seized by the U.S. Army and shipped to the Library of Congress in 382 crates, starting in March 1946. In addition, records show that the library received several thousand books in 1949 with the approval of Jewish refugee organizations as part of a general distribution of "non-traceable" Nazi loot.

The present search for Nazi-looted books has attracted much less public attention than a parallel hunt for gold and art treasures stolen by the Nazis from mainly Jewish collectors, which had greater financial value. Yet it goes to the heart of the Nazi program of cultural extermination.

During their early years in power, the Nazis simply destroyed Jewish and other ideologically suspect books, burning them in great bonfires while the former owners looked on, powerless to intervene. But the policy began to change in 1938 and 1939, when a top Nazi theoretician, Alfred Rosenberg, charged by Hitler with waging "ideological and spiritual war against Jews and Judaism," advocated using some of the books for "scholarly" purposes. Millions of books and manuscripts--including many priceless Torah scrolls--that would previously have been destroyed were transferred to Nazi libraries and museums.

Under Rosenberg's auspices, an Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question was established in Frankfurt in 1941, as part of the Nazi effort to accumulate information on a people that was already slated for extermination. Hundreds of thousands of books from looted Jewish libraries in cities like Berlin, Warsaw, Paris, Vilnius and Vienna were brought to Frankfurt to be incorporated into Rosenberg's institute.

After the war, these and several million other Jewish books fell into the hands of the victorious U.S. Army, along with vast mounds of captured Nazi documents and propaganda material. At first, there was little supervision of the allied recovery effort. When Sargent Child, newly appointed archives adviser to U.S. military commander Lucius Clay, arrived on the scene in September 1945, four months after V-E Day, he was struck by the phenomenon of American soldiers wandering through Germany "liberating books."

"I now have a better appreciation of the old stories about what the Yankees took from the South," Child wrote the Librarian of Congress, Luther Evans. "Their grandsons and those grandsons of the Rebs are following the old pattern."

By early 1946, however, the U.S. Army had embarked on an organized effort to repatriate some 3 million books that had been looted by the Nazis. They collected the loot in a warehouse in the town of Offenbach, just outside
Frankfurt, under the control of Pomrenze. The Offenbach building had itself been confiscated from the chemicals conglomerate, I.G. Farben, that had manufactured the gas used at Auschwitz and other concentration camps.

The restitution effort coincided with a massive purchasing and collection drive by a consortium of American libraries led by the Library of Congress, which had been cut off from German materials for more than six years. Anxious to fill these gaps, the library dispatched a mission to Germany, armed with authority to requisition suspected Nazi collections.

"They were like kids in a candy store," says Astrid Eckert, a German PhD student from Berlin who has made a detailed study of the American restitution effort.

To bolster their authority, the Library of Congress representatives were given the rank and privileges of junior officers. "It is important" to wear uniforms, chief of mission Reuben Peiss cabled Washington in October 1945. "You get into all kinds of facilities with them and all kinds of trouble without them." In their communications back home, mission members adopted military jargon, describing Nazi libraries as "targets" and Germany as "the theater."

Many of the books shipped back to Washington by the Library of Congress Mission were purchased legitimately from German dealers. But others were confiscated from German libraries on the pretext—not always justified, according to Eckert and other researchers--of seizing "Nazi propaganda." Some of this confiscated material, researchers believe, was probably looted from Jewish collections.

Library of Congress records show that Pomrenze and his successors authorized the transfer of 382 crates of material, containing 77,000 items, from the Rosenberg Institute in Frankfurt to the Library of Congress between March and September 1946. Many of the 20,000 or so books in the institute's "working library" had come from "non-tainted" sources, including the Frankfurt public library. But researchers now believe that the library--like other Nazi collections--also contained looted Jewish books.

In accepting the Rosenberg material, Library of Congress representatives signed statements declaring that the shipments did not include Nazi-looted books "from countries other than Germany which would be subject to normal restitution procedures." But Pomrenze, who was in charge of the Offenbach depot at the time, says that it was impossible to completely separate the looted from the non-looted material. Many of the books bore no marks that would permit sorters to identify owners.

Library of Congress records fail to clearly identify the nature of the 1946 shipments from Offenbach, describing them as books on politics, law and "the Jewish question" in German, French and Italian, according to a document first discovered by Kenneth Alford, an amateur historian who has studied the question of Nazi loot.

How to dispose of the non-traceable Jewish books stored at Offenbach became a hot political issue, with Jewish organizations in America and Palestine staking rival claims. Some members of the Library of Congress Mission favored shipping the loot back to the United States. Librarian Evans did his best to steer clear of the controversy, instructing subordinates "not to touch" the heirless material until an amicable settlement could be reached.

Library of Congress officials understood very clearly that how they dealt with the Jewish book issue--and the related question of confiscated Nazi collections--could come back to haunt them. In March 1946, Peiss wrote to Evans to defend the "moral cleanliness" of his operation. "One day we are going to face accusations and we may find we have made unwise decisions on a few specific issues, but I think we shall continue to have a clear conscience."

In the end, a nonprofit organization called Jewish Cultural Reconstruction was given responsibility for distributing the half million books left behind after the Offenbach operation closed down in 1949. Many of the books were sent to the newly established state of Israel. According to JCR records, American institutions
received a total of 158,111 books, of which 5,708 went to the Library of Congress.

Tracing what happened to the JCR books—and the ones received earlier from the Rosenberg Institute—is difficult. The Library of Congress did not keep track of the books that it received from Offenbach, although the JCR books were marked with a sticker inside the back cover. Some were processed into the library's own collections; others were distributed to sister institutions around the country.

Last fall, the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations completed a report largely exonerating the Library of Congress, and concluding that it had made a good-faith effort to screen the shipments from Offenbach for "restitutable" books. That in turn triggered an investigation by the U.S. Presidential Commission on Holocaust Era Assets, which has yet to publish its findings.

More than half a century after the war, most of the original owners of the looted books are dead. Returning the books has become a practical impossibility, even supposing that the owners could be identified and traced. But some researchers believe the library could have done more to identify and catalogue the books.

David Moore, an acquisitions assistant at the Library of Congress who has studied the Offenbach records, says there should be a special entry in the library's electronic catalogue for books received from Offenbach. "These books belong to people who were murdered in the camps. If they are part of our collection, we should identify them."

Library officials say they are working closely with the Presidential Commission and would like to find "a meaningful way" of commemorating the victims of Nazi looting. "The record shows that we tried to do the right thing," says Michael Grunberger, head of the Hebraic Section of the Library of Congress. He describes the library as "an appropriate home" for the books, in view of the destruction of Jewish life and learning in Europe and its rebirth in the United States.

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New York Times

January 5, 2000

BRITAIN: JEWS CONDEMN DEPORTATION

Jewish groups condemned the government's decision to deport, rather than arrest, an 86-year-old man accused of being a senior commander in a Latvian secret police unit that may have been responsible for more than 30,000 murders in World War II. Home Secretary Jack Straw said there was not enough evidence to arrest the man, Konrad Kalejs. But Rabbi Jonathan Romain, a spokesman for the Reform Synagogues of Britain, said that prosecuting him would show the world that "people have to face the consequences of their actions."

Sarah Lyall (NYT)

Straw: I did not have power to hold 'Nazi'

The Independent

By Paul Lashmar
Jack Straw yesterday defended his decision to deport Konrad Kalejs as calls for the arrest and prosecution of the alleged war criminal grew. The Home Secretary insisted he had no powers of detention, "and it would be wholly improper for any minister to be able to order detention as part of a criminal investigation".

In a letter to The Independent, Mr Straw said it was up to the police to decide whether to arrest and charge someone for a criminal offence. They had advised him there was not enough evidence to bring charges against Mr Kalejs, who is accused of being second-in-command of a death squad responsible for killing 30,000 people during World War Two.

But he was able to start proceedings to deport Mr Kalejs on the basis of similar evidence because deportation matters were governed by a civil standard of proof, the balance of the probabilities. "The police believe that there is insufficient evidence on which to charge Mr Kalejs, whilst I have decided, on similar evidence, that I am minded to deport Mr Kalejs," Mr Straw said.

Mr Kalejs is believed to be planning to pre-empt the Home Secretary by leaving the country voluntarily tomorrow. Some sources said Mr Kalejs wants to seek refuge in Germany and he has already bought a plane ticket. A spokesman for the German Embassy in London declined to comment on whether he would be allowed to enter the country.

However, Nazi hunters are still making strenuous last-minute efforts to have Mr Straw detain Mr Kalejs while police investigations continue. Campaigners are assembling more evidence that Mr Kalejs was involved in a pro-Nazi Latvian death squad.

Mr Kalejs was informed on Monday at the Leicestershire nursing home where he has been living that the Home Secretary was intending to deport him. He can appeal.

Lord Janner, chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, emerged from a meeting with Mr Straw yesterday to declare: "This is not the end."

He described Mr Kalejs as "an unwanted, wanted man" and said the trust hoped to meet David Veness, Assistant Commissioner, Special Operations, of the Metropolitan Police Service "as soon as possible". Mr Janner added: "The Home Secretary has acted properly and satisfactorily."

However David Sumberg, ME (Cons.), another trustee who was at the meeting with Mr Straw, expressed dismay at the brevity of the investigation. He said police usually spent years investigating allegations before deciding whether to prosecute a war criminal.

Mr Kalejs is believed to have arrived in Britain six months ago from Australia, where he was naturalised in 1957 and holds a passport. He was deported from the United States in 1994 after living in Florida for 30 years. In 1997 he was deported from Canada. In both cases he was deported because of his alleged war crimes. He is implicated in the death of more than 30,000 Jews, gypsies and Russian soldiers in Latvia.

Campaigners have requested meetings with the Latvian ambassador to Britain to discuss extraditing Mr Kalejs to the country where his alleged crimes took place and with the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, to consider the role Britain could play in a possible prosecution overseas.

The Prime Minister of Latvia, Andris Skele, said that Mr Kalejs should be put on trial if any new evidence against him surfaces. "Ongoing discussions about Kalejs are not enhancing Latvia's image," he said.

Latvian prosecutors have said they would reassess the evidence against Mr Kalejs.
Jews call for pursuit of war crimes suspect

The Courier-Mail

By JEFF SOMMERFELD
5jan00

JEWISH groups have called for the Australian Government to re-open the investigation into war crimes allegations against Konrad Kalejs.

The Australian Government's Special Investigation Unit into war crimes, established in the 1980s and now defunct, investigated claims against Mr Kalejs, but prosecutors found insufficient evidence to charge him.

Sydney holocaust survivor David Benedikt last night identified Mr Kalejs as being in command of a group of people who murdered 15 jews during World War II.

Mr Benedikt, who lived in Latvia during World War II, said he was never interviewed by Australia's war crime investigators.

Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone yesterday said the Government would reopen investigations into allegations against Mr Kalejs if new evidence came to light.

Mr Kalejs, 86, was yesterday served with a deportation notice by the British Government which followed similar orders from the United States in 1994 and Canada in 1997.

The deportations were based on sworn testimony that Mr Kalejs was a senior member of a pro-Nazi Arais Kommando death squad which operated in central Latvia during World War II.

But Professor Konrad Kwiet, the chief historian for the SIU said it would be futile to try to prosecute Kalejs and Australia should concentrate on convicting war criminals from more recent conflicts.

United States and Canadian Federal Court witnesses said Mr Kalejs was a company commander and first lieutenant in the Arais Kommando, which was involved in the murder of over 50,000 Jews.

Born in Latvia in 1913, Mr Kalejs immigrated to Australia in 1950 and shortly after worked for the Immigration Department for three years. He became an Australian citizen in 1957 and moved to the United States in 1959.

Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said any Australian citizen was entitled under law to return and he denied Australia was a haven for war criminals.

National vice-president of the Council of Australian Jewry Jeremy Jones said many witnesses to crimes in World War II were murdered or could no longer testify.

"It would appear that we don't take into account the historical logic of World War II that if you belong to a certain unit, and were at certain place at a certain time and held a certain rank, you were involved in crimes against humanity," Mr Jones said.

"Konrad Kalejs wasn't a gardener and he wasn't an accountant with the Arais Kommando. Whatever he was, he was someone who held rank in a unit (which) had one role, which was to kill people."

Investigators receive dossier on alleged war criminal

This Bulletin: Thu, Jan 6 2000 5:29 AM AEDT

Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Australian police have reportedly sent a dossier on a Lithuanian-born World War II war crimes suspect to investigators in Vilnius.

The Baltic News Service says prosecutors have received two large boxes of tapes, video-cassettes and documents on suspect Antanas Gudelis.

Prosecutors say Mr Gudelis is suspected of having shot civilians, including Jews, in a small Lithuanian town in 1941, during the Nazi occupation.

Gudelis, 88, has been living in Adelaide since the end of the war and has denied the charges, which have previously been investigated by Australian police.

The news comes as controversy rages in Britain and Australia over another war crimes suspect, Konrad Kalejs.

Kalejs is facing deportation from Britain back to Australia.

But a British newspaper is claiming Mr Kalejs is intending to go to Mexico after being served with the deportation notice from Britain.

*The Guardian* says Mr Kalejs is believed to have bought an airline ticket from Britain to the German city of Frankfurt.

From there, it is understood he will fly on to Mexico, where he has friends.

Mr Kalejs was served with a deportation notice on Monday, after British Home Secretary Jack Straw was told police did not have enough evidence to lay war crimes charges over allegations he was a member of the notorious Arajs Kommando death squad in Latvia in World War II.

Wednesday, 5 January, 2000
The Canberra Times

**Search on for second alleged Nazi** By DEBRA WAY and JANE WARDELL

The identity of a second alleged Nazi war criminal sheltering in Australia may be revealed today, shortly before Konrad Kalejs who has been expelled from Britain, is expected to arrive back. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, the Nazi-hunting organisation that tracked Mr Kalejs down, said it had information about a former member of a war-time German police battalion now living in Australia and may reveal it today. Meanwhile, the Federal Government said it would reopen investigations into Mr Kalejs if new evidence were uncovered, but would not be bullied into banning him from the country.

Mr Kalejs, 86, an Australian citizen since 1957, is expected to arrive back in Australia this week after Britain served a deportation notice on him. Accused of being a death-camp officer in Latvia, Mr Kalejs originally settled in Australia in 1950 and has since been deported from the United States and Canada. Australia's willingness to take him back has outraged the Simon Wiesenthal Centre. The centre's chief Nazi hunter, Dr Efraim Zuroff, raised the new claims of another alleged war criminal living in Australia. He said the centre was preparing evidence to present to the Federal Government on a former member of a German police battalion involved in mass killings in Belarus. "This person was a member of a police unit that actively participated in the mass murder of tens of thousands of civilians in the latter half of 1941," Dr Zuroff said. "He was involved in police activities, then after the war he emigrated to Australia." Dr Zuroff would not reveal where the man lived in Australia, apart from saying it was not Sydney or Melbourne. Australian Democrats justice spokesman Brian Greig said yesterday that Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone had doggedly pursued failed tycoon Christopher Skase for stealing millions of dollars but was welcoming a suspected Nazi war criminal back without threat of prosecution. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said Australia had some of the toughest laws to prosecute war criminals but the
Federal Government needed evidence to do so. AAP
Katherine Page

From: Katherine Page
Sent: Thursday, January 06, 2000 2:25 PM
Subject: HOLOCAUST ASSETS CLIPS 01/06/00

War Criminal News

Konrad Kalejs (3)

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General News

Lawyer seeks symbolic franc for Vichy France deeds

Helping a refugee along the long road to citizenship

Baltic Nations Urged To Punish Nazis

Updated 4:39 PM ET January 5, 2000

RIGA, Latvia (AP) - A U.S. congressman criticized Latvia and Lithuania on Wednesday for failing to prosecute alleged Nazi war criminals more aggressively. U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor serving in Congress, said during a two-day visit to the region that the former Soviet Baltic republics have not kept their promises to bring Nazis to justice. Latvia and Lithuania "have not shown commitment and determination in pursuing war criminals," the California Democrat said in the Latvian capital, Riga. Some 80,000 Latvian Jews were killed during the 1941-44 Nazi occupation. In Lithuania, more than 250,000 Jews were murdered. After regaining independence from Moscow in 1991, both countries pledged to prosecute Nazi war criminals. However, no Nazi trials have gotten under way in either country. Lantos urged Latvia to request the extradition of Konrad Kalejs, a Latvian-born Australian citizen currently in Britain. Kalejs, 86, was deported from the United States in 1994 and from Canada in 1997. Both countries kicked him out over allegations that he was in a unit that took part in killing more than 30,000 people, primarily Jews, in Latvia during World War II. Kalejs has denied the charges. In the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius on Tuesday, Lantos met with prosecutor Kazys Pedncia but said he was disappointed with the results of the meeting, the Baltic News Service reported. The only two Nazi cases to come to court in Lithuania were halted because the defendants were deemed too ill to stand trial.

Nazi suspect on way to Mexico

Date: 06/01/00 Sydney Morning Herald
Suspected Australian Nazi war criminal Konrad Kalejs was expected to leave Britain for Mexico today, as Nazi hunters expressed their frustration over the recent death of a second Australian citizen accused of wartime atrocities.

The Federal Government said it could not stop Latvian-born Kalejs coming to Australia, as he had been a citizen since 1957.

Britain's *Guardian* newspaper reported that Kalejs was believed to have bought an airline ticket to Frankfurt, Germany, and from there he would fly to Mexico, where he has friends.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre had expected to name another Australian citizen - a member of a German police battalion which murdered thousands of people in Belarus in 1941 - after checking the man's fitness to stand trial, but instead learned the man was dead.

Chief Nazi hunter Dr Efraim Zuroff said the centre was trying to establish when the man died, and believed it was in recent weeks.

"He just died not long ago," Dr Zuroff said from Jerusalem.

"This guy is the beneficiary of the policy of the Australian Government.

"You can imagine how frustrated I am."

Britain served Kalejs, 86, with a deportation notice on Monday.

The notice was served after police concluded they had insufficient evidence to lay war crimes charges over allegations that he was an officer of the notorious Arajs Kommando squad.

The squad has been blamed for the deaths of 30,000 people in Latvia.

Kalejs, discovered at a British retirement home last week, had seven days to appeal against the notice but had said he intended leaving anyway.

The *Guardian* said documents lodged against Kalejs's 1994 appeal against deportation from the United States placed him in the Arajs squad.

The paper said it had seen a signed note, written to the registrar of Riga University by Kalejs on May 15, 1943.

It read: "I hereby inform you that I am in the service of the Commander of the Security Police and SD of Latvia - in the Latvian Security Section as a company commander."

A 1941 form signed by Victor Arajs, who led the squad and was later sentenced to life imprisonment in Germany, said First Lieutenant Konrad Kalejs was a member of the Latvian Auxiliary Security Police.

**AAP**

**Pressure grows on Straw to stop alleged Nazi leaving Britain**

The Independant

By Paul Lashmar

06 January 2000

Pressure grew yesterday for the Home Secretary to stop Konrad Kalejs, the alleged Nazi war criminal, from
leaving Britain as he is expected to do today. Campaigners say the British authorities should hold him here until the police have completed their inquiries.

Jack Straw has said he intends to deport Mr Kalejs, 86, but it is believed Mr Kalejs is planning to avoid deportation by leaving Britain. He came here six months ago and lives at Catthorpe Manor retirement home in Leicestershire.

Robin Corbett, Labour chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee said yesterday that Mr Kalejs should be detained: "If we're concerned enough that his presence here is not conducive to the public good, he should be detained while further enquiries are made."

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre said Mr Kalejs served as a lieutenant in the Arajs Kommando unit, which participated in the mass murder of at least 30,000 civilians, mainly Jews, in Latvia in the Second World War.

Confusion grew as to how much evidence on Mr Kalejs' alleged war crimes was available to the Metropolitan Police. They have told Jack Straw there was not enough evidence to arrest or prosecute.

Mr Kalejs, an Australian citizen, was deported from America in 1994 and Canada in 1997 after inquiries revealed evidence of his alleged involvement in war crimes. He returned to Australia where a further investigation had been undertaken. The authorities there decided not to prosecute.

The Metropolitan Police said this week that "the Australian information is by far the most in-depth and extensive". But yesterday Robert Greenwood, the former head of the Australian war crimes unit, said no "responsible investigative body" there had probed the Kalejs case with a view to bringing a prosecution.

Mr Greenwood said his unit had monitored US and Canadian investigations into Mr Kalejs during the 1980s and 1990s. But by the time he came to Australia, the war crimes unit had been disbanded. Files from the former Soviet Union could provide extra evidence, he said.

The Latvian government said it would be asking Britain whether there would be grounds for Latvia to seek Mr Kalejs' extradition.

**Second alleged Nazi war criminal recently died**

This Bulletin: Thu, 6 Jan 2000 8:36 AEDT Australian Broadcasting Corporation

The Jerusalem-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre has discovered that a second Australian citizen it believes to be guilty of Nazi war crimes has recently died.

The centre has told Channel Nine the man was believed to have served in a police battalion that was involved in mass murder in Belarus and Poland during World War II.

The centre's director, Dr Efraym Zuroff, has accused the Australian Government of leniency for failing to help prosecute the alleged war criminal.

"Let me just add that this person, I think it's fair to say, was the beneficiary of the benign neglect of the Australian Government and was consequently able to die in peace and tranquility without ever having to pay for his crimes," he said.

**Papon rushed to hospital, asks presidential pardon**

Thierry Leveque
PARIS, Jan 6 (Reuters) - Convicted Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon was rushed to hospital overnight from Paris's La Sante prison suffering from heart trouble, the French Justice Ministry said on Thursday.

Papon, 89, who has a history of cardiac illness, was taken to the Pitie-Salpetriere hospital in southeastern Paris on Wednesday afternoon with tachycardia, or rapid heartbeat.

A ministry source said Papon had been meant to return to his cell on Wednesday evening, but doctors decided to keep him longer for tests. He had been in jail since October 22 when he began serving a 10-year sentence for complicity in crimes against humanity for his role in the deportation of 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps.

The source said Papon's lawyers had submitted an official request for a presidential pardon on medical grounds.

Lawyer Jean-Marc Varaut, who saw Papon on Tuesday, told LCI television on Thursday Papon was "very tired" and "his life was in danger."

"Two weeks ago I had alerted the justice minister to his deteriorating state of health," Varaut said. "Let's not forget that he is in his 90th year. At that age, no one is ever detained."

Papon had already been treated in hospital last November.

MINISTRY RULES OUT FRESH APPEAL

Supervisor of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime's regional Office for Jewish Questions in southwest France during World War Two, Papon was found guilty by a Bordeaux court in April 1998 of helping to organise the transport of Jews to death camps.

He dodged post-war purges to enjoy an illustrious career as Paris police chief and then budget minister.

His trial, which began in 1997 after a 17-year legal battle, was interrupted several times because of his poor health.

The Justice Ministry killed speculation that Papon might be able to launch a fresh appeal. It said the case was definitively closed, ruling out the possibility that he could use a new move by the Supreme Court as grounds for appeal.

The Supreme Court (Cour de Cassation) has indicated it will drop a requirement for a defendant to spend the night before an appeal in prison.

Papon lost the right to appeal last October when he refused to surrender and fled to Switzerland ahead of the hearing, only to be rapidly arrested and handed back to France.

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has ruled three times that France violated the right to a fair trial because of that requirement.

Varaut said the Supreme Court's change of tune meant that Papon should be freed immediately.

Jewish group scolds Costa Rica in hunt for Nazi

NEW YORK, Jan 5 (Reuters) - A leading Jewish group on Wednesday accused Costa Rica of breaking international war crimes laws by sheltering a Nazi who executed a 4-year-old Jewish girl in Ukraine during World War II.

The New York-based World Jewish Congress (WJC) said it would make formal charges against Costa Rica at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva in the coming weeks concerning Bohdan Koziy, who has lived in the Central American country for more than 15 years.

"We have information that he is still there in Costa Rica and the government is undertaking no efforts to deport him or extradite him to Ukraine where he could stand trial," WJC Executive Director Elan Steinberg said. He said all countries are required by U.N. conventions on genocide and Nazi war crimes to expel and bring to prosecution Nazi war criminals in their midst.

Steinberg said his group was bringing the issue to the attention of the U.N. commission in the context of another case --
that of an alleged Nazi war criminal from Latvia whose story is making headlines in Britain and Australia this week.

On Monday Britain ordered the deportation to Australia of Konrad Kalejs, 86, suspected of aiding the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Latvia. Kalejs, an Australian citizen, had previously been deported from the United States and Canada.

"In the case of Kalejs, there is an argument as to whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute. But for Koziy, there is no such argument. This man is a murderer," Steinberg said.

"I think this is a moral stain on Costa Rica, particularly as we enter the 21st century," he said.

Koziy took part in anti-Jewish actions during the war as a member of the Ukrainian police, which operated under Nazi direction.

In Costa Rica, government spokesman Danilo Chaverri said the country had rejected a 1988 extradition request by the then Soviet Union because Moscow would not rule out the death penalty for Koziy.

"Costa Rica had a request from the former Soviet Union, and it was rejected, but after the dissolution of the USSR, neither Russia nor Ukraine nor any other state has sought the extradition of Koziy," said Chaverri, chief of staff for President Miguel Angel Rodriguez.

"If it (extradition) is proposed, we will resolve the situation through the courts," Chaverri said.

A Costa Rican immigration official who asked to remain anonymous said Koziy and his wife Yaroslava have lived in the country legally since Oct. 28, 1984, and have a right to remain as pensioners.

Koziy, now in his late 70s, went to the United States in 1949, won citizenship in 1956, but was stripped of it in 1982 after a trial that exposed his atrocities.

Witnesses at the trial in Florida described how he murdered a Jewish family, including the girl he shot at point blank range as she pleaded for her life outside a police station in Lysiec, Ukraine, in 1943. German courts also found that he personally committed these crimes.

New Australian war crimes unit urged

CNN

January 6, 2000
Web posted at: 9:24 a.m. HKT (0124 GMT)

(Reuters) -- Australia's former war crimes prosecutor said on Wednesday his disbanded unit should be reformed to investigate Australians suspected of crimes against humanity from World War Two to conflicts in Cambodia and Bosnia.

Senior lawyer Robert Greenwood said his file on Konrad Kalejs, suspected of war crimes in Nazi-run Latvia and who is soon to be deported from Britain, should be reopened immediately.

Greenwood said Australia's war crimes unit had been investigating 20 to 25 cases before it was disbanded in 1993 and believes other suspected war criminals from more recent conflicts, especially those in Asia, could now be living in Australia.

"We investigated over 800 cases, but then I only concentrated on multiple murder," Greenwood told Reuters in an interview.

"As late as 1991 when I left, we still had around about 20 to 25 cases which were promising.

"I would be surprised if we don't (have suspected war criminals in Australia). I would be very surprised if some of the Pol Pot people didn't come or try to come," he said.

Greenwood said he had heard of allegations that collaborators of Cambodian dictator Pol Pot were now living in Australia and that some Australians had fought in the former Yugoslavia.
"(Australia) should set up a war crimes unit. It would certainly have to have a broader base than what my unit had, not necessarily bigger, and more permanency," he said.

Kalejs, 86, has been ordered deported from Britain and is expected to return to Australia in the next few days.

The Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center says Kalejs was an officer in the dreaded Arajs Commando unit, which was responsible for killing thousands of civilians, mostly Jews, in Latvia.

Kalejs settled in Australia in 1950 and became a citizen in 1957. He was deported to Australia from the United States in 1994 and from Canada in 1997 because of his alleged war crimes.

Greenwood said Kalejs was identified as a possible war criminal by the Australian government in the 1980s. An investigation into Kalejs ended when Greenwood’s unit was disbanded, before Kalejs returned to Australia.

"There was not enough evidence to begin a prosecution the moment he set foot on Australian soil, but certainly enough to treat it as a very high priority case for some further investigation," Greenwood said.

Greenwood said Australia should immediately reopen his file on Kalejs and assist Latvia in any new investigation.

"When I went to Latvia to investigate these matters we were only given limited access, particularly to KGB files which are vital. But that is all changing now," Greenwood said.

Australia has said it would not investigate Kalejs unless it was presented with new evidence.

Greenwood’s unit brought three prosecutions against suspected Nazi war criminals in Australia. One was abandoned on medical advice and two failed. Australia cited costs and the failed prosecutions when closing the crimes unit.

Greenwood said there was a more urgent need to establish a war crimes unit in Australia now than when his was formed in 1987. This was because of conflicts in East Timor, Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia and the flow of refugees into Australia.

He said he had heard reports that victims of Pol Pot’s brutal regime, under which an estimated 1.7 million people died between 1975 and 1979, had met their tormentors in Australia.

"There is a lot of anecdotal evidence. The people that made these allegations are sane, they are not crazy," Greenwood said.

But Greenwood said Australia would have to introduce new war crimes laws to enable wider prosecutions because the present law limits prosecutions to the European theatre of World War Two.

He said there was now an international will to tackle crimes against humanity and cited the Bosnian war crimes tribunal and United Nations moves for a permanent war crimes tribunal.

"You have a hell of a lot more political will about matters that are contemporary than you do about the old Nazis," he said.

Thursday January 6 2000

Financial Times

LATVIA: Pursuit of past wrongs causes divisions
By Vijai Maheshwari
If Latvia seeks the extradition from Australia of 86-year-old Konrad Kalejs, as its prime minister - under international pressure - has hinted it might do, it would be the first time the Baltic country has tried to bring to justice a war crimes suspect from the period of Nazi occupation.

But it would not be the first time it has sought a war crimes prosecution from the 1940s. Along with the other two Baltic countries, Latvia recently began to bring to court those they believe were responsible for “crimes against humanity” during the Stalinist occupation that followed the defeat of the Nazis.

The zeal with which the Baltic countries have begun to address the wrongs of the Soviet occupation and the apparent slowness to pursue those from the Nazi era has outraged the Russian government and angered large numbers of their own populations.

Mr Kalejs, who is suspected of aiding the slaughter of Jews, has been staying in Britain. On Monday the UK authorities ordered him deported to Australia, whose citizenship he holds.

On Wednesday Normans Penke, Latvia’s ambassador to London, said his government would seek extradition of Mr Kalejs if there was enough evidence for prosecution against him.

Earlier in the week, Andris Shkele, Latvia’s prime minister, was quoted by Latvian Radio as saying: "Ongoing discussions about Kalejs are not enhancing Latvia’s image. If there is enough evidence against Kalejs it has to be evaluated."

What is also not enhancing Latvia’s image - at least not in Moscow - is the trial of red-partisan Vasily Kononov, who is accused of colluding in the deportation of Latvians after the Nazi defeat. As a member of an anti-fascist squad during the war, he is also said to have acted as agent provocateur, burning down villages while posing as an SS officer.

If convicted, the 75-year-old pensioner, whose trial has become a cause celebre in Russia, might spend the rest of his life behind bars.

There are others. Alfreds Noviks, former people’s commissar of the Latvian Socialist Republic, died in prison last year after being sentenced at the age of 88 for helping organise the deportation of more than 60,000 people.

Mikhail Farbtukh, an ex-NKVD officer from the eastern town of Daugavpils, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for genocide against Latvian people from 1941-1949.

Estonia meanwhile sentenced 75-year-old Karl-Leonhard Paulov last January to an eight-year suspended prison term for shooting three anti-Soviet guerrillas. It also sentenced Vasily Beshkov to an eight-year term for helping in the deportation of four families to Siberia in 1949.

In pursuing these Soviet era cases, the Baltic countries are setting a quiet precedent.

"There’ve been lots of memoirs and speeches about crimes committed by the Soviets,” says Hannes Kont, spokesman for the Security Police Board of Estonia. “But no one has prosecuted anyone. There was no precedent in the whole world for this."

Mr Kont calls the process an attempt to “clear our past from this horror”.

It has not been easy. Although political will for prosecution is strong, most involved in Soviet-era crimes are either dead or escaped to Russia in 1991. Eyewitness reports are questionable at best, most of the archives were destroyed, and fledgling governments were wary of incurring Russia’s wrath.

With their future membership of the European Union now almost assured, stronger legal systems in place, and a growing confidence with regard to Russia, the Baltic states are now moving forward.

More than eight people are being tried in Latvia, while four have been tried in Estonia, most of them over the age of 75. Within the next year or two, the two nations hope to convict scores more.

Russia’s ambassador in Latvia calls it a “witch hunt”, while Yuri Luzhkov, Moscow’s popular mayor, has requested Mr Kononov’s deportation to Russia to prevent “the illegal actions of the Latvian judicial machinery contradictory to generally accepted standards of human rights”.

He has joined the Russian Duma in calling for sanctions against Latvia and demanding they also go after Nazi criminals.

Some Russians are also afraid the trials in the Baltics could spark a string of anti-Soviet trials across the former USSR.
Realising the sensitive nature of the convictions, Estonia has been careful not to alienate its Russian-speaking population. It has opted for suspended sentences, given that most of the people involved are more than 75 years old.

"We're more calm, we don't need revenge," says Mr. Kont.

Latvians have been stricter, favouring prison sentences for convicted red-partisans and even holding them in prison pending trial.

**Lawyer seeks symbolic franc for Vichy France deeds**

01/05/00

PARIS, Jan 5 (Reuters) - A French lawyer for Holocaust survivors and resistance fighters said on Wednesday he had asked France to acknowledge its civil and financial responsibility for crimes of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime.

Alain Levy said he had written to Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement in November asking for a symbolic one franc in damages for the crimes committed by France during World War Two.

Levy, one of the lawyers who won the conviction of Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon in 1998, said that if he did not receive an answer, he would take legal action against France in the courts. He released copies of the letter to reporters in Paris.

If a court were to rule in Levy's favour, it could open the way to thousands of law suits against France by people who suffered under Vichy's anti-Semitic policies.

In his letter to Chevenement, Levy evoked President Jacques Chirac's landmark 1995 speech recognising France's responsibility in the persecution of Jews in 1940-1944.

He also notes that Papon, a senior Vichy official during the Nazi occupation, has asked a court to order France to pay the 4.6 million francs ($800,000) in damages and legal fees he owes to civil plaintiffs in the case against him.

Papon says that France is liable for the damages because he was found guilty of acts he carried out as a senior civil servant of the French state.

Some 76,000 Jews were deported from France to Nazi death camps during World War Two.

Survivors receive state pensions and a state body, in which leaders of France's Jewish community hold several key posts, is currently evaluating the value of seized possessions never reclaimed because their owners were killed.

January 6, 2000

**Helping a Refugee Along the Long Road to Citizenship**

By COREY KILGANNON

New York Times

Liza Pasternak, 71, survived the Holocaust and decades of anti-Semitic harassment by the Soviet government by never losing the hope that someday she would escape to America and become a citizen here.

She did escape, coming from Ukraine to New York 10 years ago, but citizenship still eludes her.

She applied to the Immigration and Naturalization Service three years ago but has seen little progress.

"I.N.S. has always taken forever processing people, but this is probably the worst case we've had," said Inna Stavitsky, a project manager for the Brooklyn Refugee Project, which has helped 400 refugees get their citizenship, usually within two years, since May 1998 and recently began helping Ms. Pasternak. "Liza came to this country to regain her honor and her dignity, but she still feels like a second-class citizen."
The project, which gives citizenship applicants legal assistance, tutors and carfare to appointments, is financed by the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged, a beneficiary of the U.J.A.-Federation of New York, one of seven charities supported by The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund.

In her apartment in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, on Tuesday, Ms. Pasternak studied a workbook for her naturalization test. There was a list of vocabulary words, with red check marks next to the ones she had learned. The term "concentration camp" had a red check mark.

In September 1941, when she was 13, Nazi soldiers rounded up Jews from her village, in Ukraine near the Polish border, and took them to a small guarded compound on the outskirts of a town called Tulchin, she recalled.

Many prisoners were shot, including Ms. Pasternak's parents. She lost her hearing after a German soldier hit her on the head with the butt of his rifle, she said, and she stopped speaking for months after seeing a soldier kill two Jewish babies.

Prisoners ate only the meager meals of potatoes and bread brought by nearby villagers. Ms. Pasternak recalled that Nazis decided almost whimsically which prisoners to execute, apparently based on news from the front of either victory or defeat.

By the time the Nazis retreated in March 1944, most prisoners had died of starvation, thirst or illness. The rest hid. "They found me in the forest," she said through tears. "I was like a skeleton. They did not know if I was boy or girl."

After regaining her health and some of her hearing, Ms. Pasternak stayed with neighbors, cleaning houses and going to school. After college, she became a high school teacher in Drogobych, a small Ukrainian town where she, her husband and their two children, one of the town's only Jewish families, were often subjected to anti-Semitic harassment.

She and her family soon found themselves jobless, Ms. Pasternak said, after she refused the government's demands that she inform on a former student who became a dissident, and on the poet Boris Pasternak, who was mistaken for a relative. Ms. Pasternak was frequently threatened with banishment to Siberia. The harassment especially upset her husband, who soon died of a heart attack at 48.

She and her daughter finally got permission to leave Ukraine in 1990 and settled in Brighton Beach, where she worked as a house cleaner. She first applied for citizenship in early 1997 but said she failed her first oral test because she could not hear certain questions properly.

Recently, she said, she was called in for an interview only to have it canceled because her file could not be found. Despite being fingerprinted five times there at the I.N.S. office, she said, she keeps receiving notices that her fingerprint records are not on file.

"It's a matter of pride," Ms. Stavitsky said. "She feels it's her destiny to become an American citizen."

Ms. Pasternak says that she is growing despondent but that she has spent a lifetime waiting and hoping, and continues to study her English and history workbooks.

"I refuse all my life my government making me denounce America as an imperialist power," she said. "I come here because they say America is a just society and democracy makes everybody equal."
General

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New Leader Chosen for German Jews
Sunday January 9 3:04 PM ET

BURT HERMAN Associated Press Writer  BERLIN (AP) - A 62-year-old talent agent who hid with Catholic farmers during the Holocaust was elected Sunday to lead Germany’s Jewish community, and immediately pledged to help integrate the thousands of Soviet immigrants who are rejuvenating Jewish life in the country. Paul Spiegel was voted president of the Central Council of Jews by a 6-3 vote, stepping into the position left vacant after the death of Ignatz Bubis. As the head of the political arm of the Jewish community in Germany, the post in recent years has grown into the role of a moral voice for the country - involving speaking out on issues that include rising neo-Nazi sentiment after German unification and compensation for Nazi-era slave and forced laborers.

Bubis, who died in August at the age of 72, was so highly respected that many prominent people had suggested his name for the German presidency. “The work of Ignatz Bubis will be followed,” Spiegel, who heads the Jewish community in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, said Sunday. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder congratulated Spiegel on his election. The chairman of the Christian Democrat party, Wolfgang Schaeuble, said the post was important not just for Jewish life in Germany, but also to foster tolerance and democracy in the country. Spiegel was born in the western German city of Werendorf on Dec. 31, 1937. He left Germany as a child with his mother in 1939 and went to Belgium, where Catholic farmers hid him until the end of the war. His mother was also able to survive by hiding in Belgium. Spiegel’s father was sent to concentration camps in Buchenwald, Auschwitz and Dachau, but also survived. The fate of Spiegel’s older sister is not known, but she is believed to have died at the hands of the Gestapo. After the war, the family returned to Werendorf, where Spiegel attended elementary and high school. Spiegel worked as a journalist for a variety of Jewish publications and a lifestyle magazine, and has been running his own talent agency since 1986. He has been a vice president of the Central Council since 1993. Germany’s Jewish community - which numbered at about 500,000 before the Holocaust - has enjoyed a renaissance since the end of World War II. The Jewish population has grown almost
three times since the fall of the Berlin Wall to about 80,000 today - 50,000 of which are immigrants. Part of the reason for the vast influx is a law pushed by Babis' predecessor, Heinz Galinski, granting special immigration status to Jews from the former Soviet Union. But many are struggling. While those who come to Germany are often highly qualified, language barriers can stand in the way of getting jobs. Some studies have found as many as 60 to 70 percent are unemployed. Eighty percent of the Jewish communities across Germany are also in debt because of the costs of supporting their new members, Spiegel said. Because the immigrants don't have jobs, they don't pay the special taxes collected by the government to fund religious communities. He said he hoped to meet soon with Schroeder to seek more financial support for the community. Many of the immigrants are learning about Judaism for the first time. "The people who come here know they are Jews," Spiegel said, "but they don't know what Judaism is."

January 10, 2000

Hidden From Nazis, He Is New Leader of Jews

By REUTERS

BERLIN, Jan. 9 -- Paul Spiegel, a theatrical agent who was hidden from the Nazis as a child, defeated his only rival in an election today for leader of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Mr. Spiegel, 62, a former journalist from Düsseldorf, won six votes from the group's nine-member executive board.

He defeated another board member, Charlotte Knobloch, 67, of Munich, officials of the group said.

The election, in Berlin, was held to replace Ignatz Bubis, who died in August after seven years in office.

About 90,000 Jews live in Germany now, a shadow of the Jewish population of 670,000 that flourished before the Nazis came to power.

But the leader of the council, considered the leader of the Jewish community, is a figure of some influence. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was among the first to congratulate Mr. Spiegel.

Mr. Spiegel was considered a more secular and liberal figure than Ms. Knobloch and had been widely expected to win. His term of office is three years.

One big challenge will be to help in the integration in Germany of more than 60,000 poor Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, many with little knowledge of their own religion or the German language. Soviet Jews were invited to come a decade ago, in the dying days of Communist East Germany, and the arrivals have tripled the numbers of Jews in Germany.

Mr. Spiegel, who has had links with Mr. Schröder's Social Democrats in the past, said most Jewish community groups that offer assistance to the immigrants are in debt. He said he would take up the matter of funding for them with the chancellor.

He also said he would try to continue the unfinished work of reconciling Germans and Jews undertaken by Mr. Bubis, a Frankfurt real estate tycoon whose campaigning, not just for Jews but for all minorities, made him a familiar figure to millions of Germans.

"If I see that democracy in Germany is under threat I will make my voice heard," Mr. Spiegel said at a news conference.

Reflecting on bitter comments made by his predecessor shortly before he died, when Mr. Bubis complained that many ordinary Germans had still not learned the lessons of the Holocaust, Mr. Spiegel said the work of
reconciliation is far from over.

"People ask me when there will be normality between Jews and non-Jews in Germany," he said. "But incidents like the desecration of graves in Weissensee show that normalization of relations has yet to happen." He referred to an attack on a major Berlin Jewish cemetery last year.

Ms. Knobloch accepted her defeat but suggested that her sex had been a disadvantage. "As a woman I didn't stand the same chance as a man," she said at the same news conference.

Mr. Spiegel survived the Nazis after his mother hid him with Christian farmers in Belgium who treated him as one of their own. His father survived five years in concentration camps but stayed on in Germany when he learned that his German neighbors had risked their own lives to hide sacred texts from the synagogue.

Mr. Schröder, the first chancellor too young to remember Nazism, has been accused by some of seeking too hastily to forget Germany's 20th-century crimes in his effort to give Germany a stronger voice in international affairs.

He has shown impatience with the debate over a project, still far from completion, to build a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin. But last month, his government negotiated compensation for Jews and others used as slaves by the Nazis.

But Mr. Spiegel said that while polls indicated that 15 percent of Germans still harbor anti-Semitic feelings, there is cause for optimism. "The situation has improved, and the fact that Jews are saying they want to live in Germany is not a bad sign for us," he said.

A tyrant, a crook and questions about Chancellor Brown's flat

Westminster Watch by NICHOLAS LEONARD 01/10/00 Irish Independant

TWO dead men, one a tyrant and the other a crook, will be the focus of political and media attention in London this week, demonstrating that their disruptive influence has survived from the last century into the new one.

The dead tyrant is Hitler. The controversial question of his role in the Holocaust is at the centre of an extraordinary legal case which will open in the High Court tomorrow.

The right-wing historian David Irving has launched a defamation action against the paperback publisher, Penguin, and the US writer, Deborah Lipstadt, over the references to him in a book called Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory.

The outcome of the case will hinge on whether Irving can demonstrate to the court that his contentious views on Hitler and the Holocaust were underpinned by reputable research and documentation.

The whole issue, 55 years after the ending of the Second World War, continues to be highly politically sensitive in the UK and elsewhere, as has been demonstrated by the furore this month over the decision not to prosecute a suspected Nazi war criminal but to allow him to go to Australia.

In recent years, there have been embarrassing disclosures about the dismissive attitude of the government in London during the war to the initial reports of mass extermination of Jews, while in Germany, the Irving case could act as a new focal point for the revival of neo-Nazi activities.

The dead crook in the headlines in London this week is Robert Maxwell. The latest senior politician to be caught up in the aftermath of the scandal is the chancellor, Gordon Brown.
The revelation that he bought his London flat from the receivers of a collapsed Maxwell company is not, in itself, particularly awkward for Brown. Unlike his cabinet colleague, Peter Mandelson, he did not borrow funds for the purchase from the former Maxwell associate, Geoffrey Robinson, nor did he have any direct contact with the Maxwell empire.

But the revelation of the deal is profoundly embarrassing for Brown and for New Labour as a whole since it once again highlights the tangled web of connections between Robinson, who had to resign as a Treasury Minister in 1998 because of the Mandelson loan affair, and members of the cabinet.

Robinson had been chairman of the group which owned the flat that Brown bought. Cynics are finding it hard to believe that it was just a coincidence that the deal happened to take place spontaneously and that Brown was as ignorant of the recent history of the ownership of the property as he is now claiming.

The smear-by-association of Brown over the matter comes at a time when Robinson himself is under considerable pressure because of embarrassing disclosures about the finances of an engineering company called Transtec, another former Maxwell offshoot, which has just collapsed. The sequence of events which led to the failure of Transtec now appears to have started during the period when Robinson was its chairman before he went into full-time politics and became paymaster-general.

Against this turbulent background, it is not surprising that Robinson is now said to be holding back from publishing his own memoirs. The heady days of last autumn when his allies were promising all manner of sensational revelations from him in the wake of his humiliating ejection from the cabinet, now seem a long time ago.

Robinson knows a great many secrets about his former cabinet colleagues and his autobiography, if it pulls no punches, clearly has the potential to be a best seller. It also has the capacity to create further havoc within the government and to encourage even more inquisitive questioning about Robinson himself, his political schmoozing, and his business affairs.

Tony Blair returns from his holiday in Portugal to find his government confronted by a widening gulf between its ambitions and its achievements.

The most blatant symbol of this gulf is the grandiose millennium Dome at Greenwich which was originally devised by the Tories but was taken up with dangerously naive enthusiasm by New Labour.

Like a large-scale parody of a political manifesto, the Dome is an extraordinary mixture of the sublime, the ridiculous and the banal. It has also achieved the bizarre feat of attracting far fewer visitors than hoped.

Friday, January 7, 2000

LA Times

Danger in Denying Holocaust?

A revisionist is accusing a prominent critic of the movement of libel. Scholars and survivors say the evidence is irrefutable, but those who question extent of horrors say they pay a price.

By KIM MURPHY, Times Staff Writer

A young German chemist named Germar Rudolf took crumbling bits of plaster from the walls of Auschwitz in 1993 and sent them to a lab for analysis. There were plenty of traces of cyanide gas in the delousing chambers where Nazi camp commanders had had blankets and clothing fumigated. There was up to a thousand times less in the rooms described as human gas chambers.
Rudolf, a doctoral candidate at Stuttgart University, concluded that large numbers of Jews may have died of typhoid, starvation and murder at Europe's most famous World War II death camp, but none of them died in a gas chamber.

When a report on his findings—commissioned by a former Third Reich general—got out, Rudolf lost his job at the respected Max Planck Institute and his doctoral degree was put on hold. He was sentenced to 14 months in prison under a 1985 German law making it a crime to incite racial hatred, his landlord kicked him out, he fled into exile and his wife filed for divorce.

There are many who say Rudolf got exactly what he deserved. But to the increasingly vocal movement of Holocaust deniers and revisionists, Rudolf stands as a crucial figure because of what he represents: a highly trained chemist who purports—despite a wide variety of scientific evidence to the contrary—to have physical proof that the gas chambers at Auschwitz did not exist.

Over the last decade, supporters of such theories have scrutinized hundreds of thousands of pages of Third Reich documents and diaries made available after the collapse of the Soviet Union. They have analyzed gas chamber construction. They have pinpointed contradictions and hard-to-believe details in stories told by camp survivors and, amid nearly universal scorn from the academic establishment, won testimonials for some of their work from academics at respected institutions, such as Northwestern University and the University of Lyon. The revisionists, whose theories will be at the center of a high-profile libel trial scheduled to begin Tuesday in London, are not operating in a vacuum. A 1993 poll by the Roper Organization found that 22% of Americans thought it possible that the Holocaust never happened.

The theorists contend that far fewer than 6 million Jews died in Europe during World War II—and that most of those who died did so through starvation, disease and ad hoc executions carried out by lower-level Nazi officers. That scenario has been almost universally dismissed as a flawed misreading of history, cooked up out of deep-seated anti-Semitism. Indeed, at least two dozen people have been prosecuted in Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Poland and Canada since 1990 under various laws prohibiting racial hatred and the defaming of the memory of those who died in Nazi death camps for even questioning what has become one of the defining horrors of the modern age.

Now one of the leading deniers of the Holocaust, British historian David Irving, is striking back, suing the most prominent critic of the movement, Emory University professor Deborah Lipstadt, for libel. The trial is likely to feature many of the world’s premier WWII historians weighing in on the mechanics, logistics, chain of command and blueprints for the extermination of millions of European Jews.

In her book, "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," Lipstadt accuses Irving of skewing documents and misrepresenting data. The book quotes analysts who describe his work as “closer to theology or mythology than to history.” As a British citizen, Irving can take advantage of British libel law, which places much of the burden on Lipstadt to prove her book did not libel the historian. Irving says his lawsuit will prove Lipstadt’s book is part of an international Jewish campaign to discredit him.

Irving, author of biographies of Adolf Hitler and his propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, has argued that Hitler has never been found to have ordered a massive extermination of the Jews and, in fact, tried to stop some of the killings. He has described Auschwitz as "a very brutal slave labor camp, where probably 100,000 Jews died." And not unlike U.S. Reform Party presidential candidate Patrick J. Buchanan, he asserts the world would have been better served if Winston Churchill had accepted Hitler's peace overtures in 1940 and allowed Hitler to fight it out with Josef Stalin in Russia.

Confronting Deniers’ Arguments Head-On

Lipstadt was among the first in the American Jewish community to abandon the long-standing practice of ignoring the Holocaust deniers, choosing instead to confront their arguments head-on. Her book accuses Irving of misreading documents and distorting facts.

Historians she quotes have said Irving ignores the fact that the Nazis deliberately avoided a paper trail and that it is quite plausible that Hitler would never personally have affixed his signature to the Final Solution. She cites accusations by prominent British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper that Irving "seizes on a small and dubious particle of evidence" and allegedly uses it "to dismiss far more substantial evidence that may not support his thesis."
"There are more people in the United States who believe that Elvis Presley is alive than who believe the Holocaust didn't happen. As an American, that's a demi-consolation," Lipstadt said in an interview. "But I see it as a clear and future danger. The future danger is when there are no people left who can say in the first-person singular, 'This is what happened to me,' it's going to be much easier to deny it."

For Irving, who is regarded in some mainstream quarters as one of the premier documentarians of the Third Reich, it is an issue of professional vindication. It is no accident, he says, that he has been banned from even entering Canada, Italy, Germany and Austria because of Holocaust denial laws in those countries. "They regard me as dangerous, and the word 'dangerous' puzzles me," he said. "I don't go around punching people in the face. . . . Dangerous' can only mean dangerous to their interests, either in the long term or the short term. "In the end, it isn't really a question of whether it's 6 million or only 1 million" Jews who died. "I think the figures have been inflated, and the significance of the inflation is that the Jewish community is trying to make out that their suffering is unique in its grandeur and the methods applied to achieve it. And it wasn't. It was just one of the many barbarisms committed under the cloak of war."

Some revisions in Holocaust history have been generally accepted. Stories that Jewish remains were manufactured into soap and lampshades have been dismissed as myth. There were, most historians now agree, no human gasings at Dachau. Deaths at Auschwitz, once estimated, based on the testimony of Nazi commanders, at up to 3 million have been scaled back to about 1.1 million. Even the widely accepted figure of 6 million Jewish dead all over Europe has been questioned in recent years by some of the world's most prominent Holocaust scholars. Raul Hilberg and Robert Jan van Pelt, two of the leading authorities, now believe the figure is probably closer to 5.1 million.

Still, scholars say, the evidence of a massive extermination campaign that resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews is so exhaustive that it is irrefutable. It includes detailed stories from camp survivors, confessions and memoirs from Nazi commandants (including Auschwitz commander Rudolf Hoess), testimony of Jewish prisoners who removed bodies from the gas chambers, blueprints uncovered from newly opened archives in Moscow that document construction of the gas chambers, records from the contractors who built the gas chambers and orders for large quantities of hydrogen cyanide gas, far more than would have been needed for fumigation, according to Van Pelt and others. There is the sheer number of Jews who arrived at the camps and never left, far more than could have fallen victim to disease or starvation, most historians believe. Since when, Lipstadt wants to know, does anyone in the name of academic inquiry have the right to claim there is "another side" to the Holocaust debate? And why is there even a debate?

To this, Rudolf, who could be called as a witness at the trial, says that no issue of history should be exempt from reexamination—even if it pains the victims.

In convicting him, Rudolf says, the court took no notice of prominent German military historian Joachim Hoffman, who credited the quality of Rudolf's research and said that to suppress it would "work a powerful hindrance to legitimate striving for scientific understanding." The court apparently was moved, however, by a preface by the former Third Reich general who had commissioned Rudolf to do the research, Otto Ernst Remer, who in 1992 himself was sentenced to prison for incitement to racial hatred.

Could a report commissioned by a man like Remer—who once joked while sniffing a cigarette lighter that he was mimicking "a Jew nostalgic for Auschwitz"—ever be a justifiable contribution to scientific literature? More to the point, says Irving, should there be political limits on academic inquiry?

"I think, by the end of this case, the word 'scholarship' will come to stink," Irving predicts. "Scholars tend to award that accolade to each other. And their scholarship usually consists of sitting in libraries reading each others' books."

Irving prides himself on relying on primary sources for his biographies: interviews or diaries of the principals, radio transmission intercepts, memorandums. In the case of his book "Hitler's War," Irving interviewed in detail most of the surviving members of Hitler's staff and only used documents that would have crossed Hitler's desk. In the process, Irving said he did not come across a single document or interview that indicated Hitler had ordered a campaign to exterminate the Jews.

"Others who have come across with something have looser criteria than I do, like the Nuremberg trials. . . . I
won't accept that. Not standing by itself," he said.
Irving's numerous critics say he fails to address the fact that the extermination campaign was carried out in deliberate secrecy, without written orders. SS chief Heinrich Himmler "explicitly forbade all discussion of it, and if it had to be mentioned, it was always disguised as 'resettlement' or 'transport to the east,'" Trevor-Roper pointed out in a review of Irving's book.
St. Martin's Press abruptly dropped plans to publish Irving's controversial biography of Goebbels in 1996 in the wake of a storm of criticism from reviewers, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and even, according to some employees, telephone death threats against the book's editor. Thomas McCormack, chairman of the publishing house, said he read the book and found it "repellent [and] effectively anti-Semitic." When the Doubleday Military Book Club backed out as well, Irving self-published the book, calling the whole affair "the most extraordinary treatment of a historian since what the Iranians did to Salman Rushdie."
Yet Irving has his admirers as well. Christopher Hitchens, writing of Irving's work in Vanity Fair, called him "not just a Fascist historian, [but] . . . also a great historian of Fascism." Gordon A. Craig, considered the dean of German historians, acknowledged that Irving has been an "annoyance" but said: "The fact is that he knows more about national socialism than most professional scholars in his field." His book on Hitler, Craig said, "remains the best study we have of the German side of the Second World War."
On the advice of her lawyers, Lipstadt won't discuss Irving or the upcoming trial. But she did say there is a danger in allowing what she calls Holocaust deniers to wear the mantle of legitimate revisionists--those who look at accepted history and raise new and often enlightening questions.

**Political Agenda Cited by Lipstadt**
"There's a definite political agenda," she said. "This is not just Looney Tunes history. These are people who want to make national socialism respectable again. And how do you make a thoroughly discredited movement respectable?
"First of all, you deal with moral equivalencies. You say, 'Oh yes, the Germans bombed London, but the Allies bombed Dresden. There were Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz, but the Americans had camps for the Americans of Japanese descent.' But there's no moral equivalency for them to bring up about the Holocaust. So instead, they are left denying the Holocaust. And denying it in such a way that you almost hear them saying, 'It didn't happen, but it should have.'"
Van Pelt, who is considered one of the world's leading authorities on Auschwitz, prepared an 800-page report on the death camp for the trial. "The whole idea of trying to prove the Holocaust is, for me, a kind of ridiculous exercise. But in some ways, it forces historians to show what they can do. I think the case has forced me . . . to look at things I preferred not to look at in the past," he said.
Van Pelt now can tell you how the gas chambers operated, how the capsules of Zyklon B were dropped in the ceiling vents, how the bodies were hauled out, and how long it took human beings to die at what concentrations of gas (about 35 minutes, in most cases).
Van Pelt's new report has not yet been made public, and Rudolf has not responded to it. "I can deal with Himmler. I can deal with Hoess. There's a certain kind of naive honesty in what they do, however evil it is," Van Pelt said. "But the contortions and complete fabrications of these deniers is obscene. "What they do is take all kinds of very straightforward evidence and basically turn it upside down. And it's an incredible effort to simply sit there and take every sentence they write and compare it to the record . . . It doesn't help you to understand anything except the contortions of their minds. And their minds are not very interesting."
The heirs of the rapidly fading generation of eyewitnesses to Hitler's World War II death camps cannot allow the Holocaust to be relegated to the historical footnotes of the 20th century, leaders of Utah's Jewish community agree. However, preventing such devaluation of the suffering and sacrifice of millions will require an abiding commitment by the progeny of Holocaust survivors. Six million Jews and millions of others were tortured and slain at Nazi killing grounds, including Auschwitz and Dachau. "Many people in this day and age forget that by abandoning or overlooking their Jewish obligations and responsibilities, they are giving criminals like Hitler a posthumous victory," said Rabbi Benny Zippel of Salt Lake City's Orthodox Chabad Lubavich Bais Menachem synagogue. "That should never happen," he added. "The Holocaust should most definitely be kept fresh in the minds of humanity in this next century, or for that matter, forever." The Religion Newswriters Association (RNA) concurred, recently choosing the Holocaust and the subsequent re-establishment of Israel as its top religion story of the 20th century. Second place went to the liturgical reforms and ecumenical mandate of the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council. The 1917 Russian Revolution and its restrictions on religious practice ranked third. RNA also ranked the Holocaust No. 4 among its top stories of the millennium, behind Martin Luther's launching of the Protestant Reformation in 1517; the invention of movable type that made mass production of the 1455 Gutenberg Bible and other spiritual works possible; and the Great Schism of 1054, which split Christianity East and West. Such recognition of the Holocaust is welcome, said Laurence Loeb, cantor of the Reform-Conservative Congregation Kol Ami. He has doubts, however, about the effectiveness of keeping the horror of the Holocaust real once those who experienced it are gone. "I have a suspicion that these things will continue to happen no matter what we do to try to prevent them," said Loeb. "We [humanity] haven't seemed to learn very much." Indeed, numerous libraries and archives exist, dedicated to preserving the evidence of the Holocaust. Perhaps the most ambitious of these is film director Steven Spielberg's ambitious Shoah Visual History Foundation, which has set out to videotape the testimonies of 50,000 survivors. "These are all fine for people who want to know more about the Holocaust," said Loeb, an anthropology professor at the University of Utah. "The real problem we will face is how to reanimate people to want to know about it. "The more often a story is repeated, the less people pay attention to it," he warned. "On the other hand, if you don't tell them at all, people forget about it. That's the problem, and I don't know how you can deal with that." Zippel also sees the hazard of "harping on how terrible the Holocaust was without in fact preventing it from happening again." Still, silence is not the answer, either. Judaism maintains that "the only way to dispel darkness is by adding and increasing light," he said. Zippel said Jews need to remember the Holocaust, but the best way of working to prevent future genocides is to educate "humanity in general about values, tolerance, religious pride and respect for fellow human beings." That, indeed, is the challenge, agreed Rabbi Joseph Goldman of Park City's Reform synagogue, Temple Har Shalom. "The Holocaust, while terribly important to the Jewish world, cannot be the sole property of Jews," he said. "If we cannot see the Holocaust as an event that goes beyond the Jewish world to more extensive human world, then I see no way that the memory is going to be sustained in a manner that is useful." That the lessons of the Holocaust have not been fully learned is evidenced by more recent genocides in Africa, East Timor and the Balkans, which have defied even armies of international peacekeepers. "No power or authority seems able to effectively intervene," Goldman said. "I think of the horror there is now, and I wonder why, when we look at the Holocaust and what it told us about the human capacity for evil, that we don't see a corresponding remorse today. That is the real tragedy."
By Douglas Davis

(February 7) -- The British government's gesture to set aside a day of Holocaust remembrance faces different forms of dissent --

Dr John Fox, a history lecturer at Kent University, found the Holocaust Day proposal to be 'inhumane.' It was not right, he asserted, to describe the persecution of the Jews as a unique or singular event. The Holocaust was not the only act of systematic mass murder during the 20th century. Nor, when it comes to man's inhumanity to man, can it claim to be a monopoly on the collective international conscience.

Mechanization and technology have equipped modern man with the ability to realize his darkest genocidal dreams, and modern man has seized the opportunity to give full expression to his xenophobic instincts in pursuit of political, religious, and racial ideologies.

The list of infamy is long. Tens of millions perished in the methodical persecutions of Stalin and Mao. More recently, Cambodia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and East Timor, convulsed by the deliberate, wanton killings of innocents, have become synonymous with barbarity.

But the current British government has opted to focus on the Holocaust and keep it alive in the national consciousness in the 21st century.

"I am determined to ensure that the horrendous crimes against humanity committed during the Holocaust are never forgotten," declared Prime Minister Tony Blair last June.

Then, with the century steaming toward a close, Home Secretary Jack Straw unveiled a consultation paper last October inviting public comments on a full-blown government proposal to institutionalize a Holocaust Remembrance Day in Britain's calendar.

"We must never forget the victims of the atrocious acts of genocide that have occurred this century," said Straw, shifting subtly from the particular to the universal. "Millions have perished and millions more have been affected because of extreme nationalism.

"As we enter the next millennium, it is fitting that we should allocate a day in our national calendar to reflect upon these tragedies in world history."

Specifically, the government's consultation paper announced its intention to canvass opinion on "how best to educate future generations about the horrors of genocide so that the lessons learnt from history are never forgotten." The object of a remembrance day, it continued, is to raise awareness of the Holocaust "as a continuing issue for all humanity, based on a recognition that it could happen again, anywhere and at any time, unless we ensure that our society is vigilant in opposing racism."

Such a day would "highlight the values of a tolerant and diverse society based on the notions of universal dignity and equal rights and responsibilities for all its citizens." At the same time, it would "provide a mark of national respect for all victims of Nazi persecution" and "demonstrate solidarity with all those who still suffer its consequences."

Above all, it would seek to ensure that "the historical events associated with the Holocaust continue to be regarded as being of fundamental importance in the next century." The government solicited suggestions for appropriate activities to mark the occasion, as well as ideas on how the day could most effectively be used to promote human-rights education.
THE consultation paper envisaged a broad range of ceremonial, educational, cultural, and community events involving senior politicians and members of the royal family.

It would also draw on the resources of a slew of national and local institutions - from the Arts Council, libraries, and museums to the media, local councils, the business community, and the voluntary sector.

And the public was invited to express its opinion on the government's preferred date for the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day: January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

That date, the government contended, was appropriate not only because it was linked to the most powerful symbol of the Holocaust, but also, more pragmatically, because it was not close to either public or school holidays, or to examination periods.

Moreover, the January 27 date would enhance the effect of Britain's remembrance day because it would coincide with remembrance days in Germany and Sweden, while falling into line with the European Union's Genocide Remembrance Day.

Possible alternative dates suggested by the government were Anne Frank Day (June 12); the anniversary of the liberation of Belsen (April 15), and the anniversary of Kristallnacht (November 9, 1938), when thousands of Jewish properties across Germany were destroyed.

Nothing could have been less controversial. Or so it seemed when the consultation paper was published.

And, indeed, the Jewish establishment heaped praise on the initiative.

Eldred Tabachnik, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the community's overarching representative umbrella, welcomed the proposal, which, he declared, "will make a major contribution to our society throughout the years ahead. This will be a day when all of us, learning from the barbarities inflicted on so many millions of people, can renew our commitment to a free and open society."

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, leader of Britain's mainstream Orthodox community, immediately endorsed a "brave and significant idea," which, he said, would serve as "a powerful reminder of the vulnerability and necessity of freedom and the dignity of difference."

Rabbi Tony Bayfield, chief executive of the Reform movement, which represents 42,000 of Britain's estimated 300,000 Jews, said a Holocaust Remembrance Day would be "a timely move that would both reflect one of the great tragedies of the 20th century and acknowledge the multi-religious character of Britain today."

And a spokesman for the London-based Holocaust Educational Trust noted that "each day the direct link with the Holocaust, through survivors, is weakened as they pass away and their memories fade... It is vital to ensure that remembrance of the Holocaust, as a uniquely important tragedy, is perpetuated."

But the Jewish establishment's ringing endorsement of the government's initiative came against a surprising backdrop of murmured unease by many others, expressed through the Jewish and secular media.

REASONS for the dissent were almost as varied as the dissenters themselves, a point made by David Cesarani, professor of modern Jewish history at Southampton University.

Cesarani, who personally supports the Holocaust Remembrance Day proposal, noted that the Jewish community's response was "ambivalent." "Some Jewish people think it is wrong to concentrate on destruction and death when there is so much that Jews should celebrate," he noted. "Others say, 'Why should the one thing
many people know about the Jewish community be the Holocaust? There is more."

But another academic, Dr John Fox, a history lecturer at Kent University, found the proposal to be "iniquitous." It was not right, he asserted, to describe the persecution of the Jews as a unique or singular event.

"By using the term Holocaust," he said, "we associate it only with the genocide of the Jews... It would have been better to have had a day called International Genocide Day."

And Gordon Graham, professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen University in Scotland, went further, questioning not only the uniqueness of the Holocaust but also the point of instituting such a memorial day.

"The suggestion," he declared, "has all the appearance of yet another futile attempt to find a secular substitute for an essentially religious idea - a day of prayer and fasting."

High-profile Reform Rabbi Jonathan Romain hoped that "the day will include commemoration of all who have suffered from dictatorship or discrimination." He said he would prefer to see a "Victims' Day" that would commemorate all who have suffered discrimination.

The current proposal, he feared, "has led many to accuse Jews of being concerned only with their own history and being insensitive to the sufferings of others."

"The Holocaust is not just a Jewish issue," echoed Ed Kessler, executive director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Relations in Cambridge. "It should be seen as a warning of what can happen when one group is allowed to scapegoat another... The day should also be used to highlight the genocides that have continued since the Holocaust - and which still continue today."

Adrien von Ferscht, of London, believed that "a national Holocaust day would do nothing to bring the message home." On the contrary, he asserted, "it would probably cause minority groups to focus on carrying out antisemitic acts of terror and desecration which could very easily snowball into making that day something Jewish people in this country would dread."

But perhaps the most severe critique came from Orthodox Rabbi Yitzhak Shochet, of London's Mill Hill Synagogue.

Writing in the Daily Telegraph, he declared that "the Holocaust has become too much of a fixation with our people, to the point of losing sight of our intrinsic objectives. Our mission and goals as a Jewish nation preceded the Holocaust by thousands of years and are totally independent of it.

"It is the height of blasphemy and self-degradation to have the Nazis determine the agenda for Jewish life and continuity. We must focus less on the tragic experiences of Jews then and concentrate on what it means to be Jewish today."

If that argument failed to convince, Shochet had another: "Our true pain and agony are private and personal and not something to be flaunted in the public arena." And another: A day that emphasized Jewish suffering, he said, "may be seen to diminish the sufferings at the hands of the Nazis of millions of others of other races and creeds." There was, he added, an obvious difference between the planned genocide of the Jews and the fate of many others, but, he asked: "Are they to absorb their memories by recalling what happened to a people other than their own?"

Perhaps the most eloquent response to the learned professors and rabbis came from Aron Zylberszac, a plain-spoken 72-year-old former inmate of Auschwitz and Buchenwald: "I listened to the radio and heard experts
trying to compare our tragedy with Kosovo," he said. "I don't think they appreciate the full horror.

"I'm not saying that Kosovo or anywhere else was less a holocaust, but nowhere else did they have crematoriums. I think there should be something to remember something so unique."

The heated debate and mostly negative reaction that the proposal has engendered among the Jewish community must have left Blair and his loyal home secretary wondering just what has hit them. Their apparently altruistic gesture, which appears to offer precious little prospect of a political return, has produced a response that, in the words of Tevye the Milkman, would cross a rabbi's eyes.

But if Blair has his way - and he usually does - Jack Straw will announce this month that Britain will mark its first annual Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, 2001, replete with all the pomp and circumstance of an official British state occasion.

**Australians Protest Nazi Suspect Return**

Friday January 7 6:41 AM ET

By Wendy Pugh

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Nazi war crimes suspect Konrad Kalejs returned to Melbourne on Friday night as Australian Jewish community protesters at the arrival gate called on the Federal Government to open a new investigation into his alleged crimes.

Kalejs, an 86-year-old Latvian-born Australian citizen, left London on Thursday after Britain ordered his deportation. He arrived in Melbourne shortly after 8:00 p.m.

War crimes campaigners accuse Kalejs of aiding the slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Latvia in World War Two. They say Kalejs was a member of a Nazi-run hit squad responsible for 30,000 deaths.

A group of about 30 protesters chanted slogans and waved placards with messages such as "Put Kalejs on Trial" and "Nazis Not Welcome."

"A lot of my family perished in the Holocaust," protester Karen Feldman told Reuters.

"In memory of them and the people who were supposedly killed by Kalejs I think it is important we say that, while being allowed to come back to Australia, he should be put on trial."

Melbourne Airport spokesman Tricia Hyde said he was being taken to a waiting car in a restricted area within the airport, avoiding the public arrivals area.

Jewish students earlier in the day led a larger protest joined by politicians, unions, former Soviet war veterans and the wider Jewish community.

**Calls To Re-Open Kalejs Case**

Kalejs has twice returned to Australia after being deported from the United States in 1994 and Canada in 1997 because of his suspected war crimes.

Australia has said there was insufficient evidence to prosecute Kalejs, who was investigated by its disbanded war crimes unit in the early 1990s, and will not re-open his case unless it is presented with new evidence.

Latvia said this week it had re-opened the Kalejs case.
Australia's Jewish leaders and former war crimes prosecutor Robert Greenwood have called on the Australian government to also re-open the investigation into Kalejs, saying new evidence in KGB files could be uncovered since the fall of the Soviet Union.

"The government must find the political will to urge the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to re-activate the Konrad Kalejs case...," said Labor opposition leader Simon Crean.

"The file can never be closed on the investigation of such serious crimes...and there must be no hiding place for those responsible for war crimes," Crean said.

Crean said the government of Prime Minister John Howard should hand over its files on Kalejs to the Latvian authorities to assist in their investigation.

Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock earlier in the day rejected criticisms and said anyone with new information should forward it to the Australian Federal Police.

"You only can investigate evidence and if people believe there is additional evidence available either here or abroad, the statements can be put to the AFP easily enough so that those certain matters can be examined," he told reporters.

**Government Slammed For Inaction**

Australian Union of Jewish Students political affairs director Lior Harel said the government must stop Kalejs using his Australian citizenship to protect himself from prosecution.

The Australian government says it cannot stop Kalejs returning as he holds Australian citizenship.

"We will not stand its indifference and inaction as a suspected war criminal continues to evade authorities overseas and use his privilege of Australian citizenship as a means of protecting himself," Harel said.

Kalejs settled in Australia in 1950 and became an Australian citizen in 1957, but has only lived in the country a few years after being deported from the United States and Canada.

**Australia Won't Reopen Nazi Case**

09:04EST

*By ROHAN SULLIVAN*  
*Associated Press Writer*  
*01/10/00*

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) -- The Australian government on Monday defended its decision not to reopen an investigation into Nazi war crimes suspect Konrad Kalejs.

Kalejs, 86, a Latvian-born Australian citizen, went into hiding after returning to Australia last Friday. He had been living in Britain, but left to avoid deportation proceedings there.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, which searches the world for suspected former Nazis, has said Kalejs served in the notorious Arajs Kommando, a Nazi killing squad responsible for the death of 30,000 people, mostly Jews, in Latvia during World War II. He has denied the allegations.

Under increasing pressure to put Kalejs on trial or change laws so he can be deported to Latvia, Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone warned Monday that if the government acted without strong new evidence it could jeopardize any future prosecution by exempting the suspect from retrial.

Evidence gathered by agencies including the U.S. Office of Special Investigations and Australia's now-disbanded war
crimes unit has led to deportation proceedings in the United States, Canada and Britain.

But to seek criminal charges, those countries would have needed evidence showing a higher standard of proof than they needed for deportation.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper of Sydney on Monday published a photograph it said was taken in 1942 of Kalejs wearing the uniform of a Nazi SS auxiliary.

Australian newspapers also printed excerpts from a Nazi propaganda newsletter dated June 5, 1942, in which someone said to be Kalejs describes taking part in attacks on Soviet-held villages.

Vanstone warned that if charges were laid and Kalejs was acquitted, he could never be tried in Australia again and could not be extradited on those charges.

"If you believe someone is really guilty ... you don't only want a trial, you want them convicted," Vanstone said in a radio interview.

The Latvian government said it would seek Kalejs' extradition from Australia immediately if new evidence of war crimes was uncovered. The two governments have begun talks on an extradition treaty.

In his only interview since returning to Australia, Kalejs told the Special Broadcasting Service that he was an officer in the Arajs Kommando.

But he denied he was ever present when civilians were shot. "Never, never ... I never participated in anything like that," Kalejs said in the interview, which was conducted in Latvian and translated by SBS.

Kalejs said he was a student in Latvia before being told by German generals in 1942 that he would be placed in command of a unit of Latvian soldiers.

Kalejs said he discovered later that the soldiers were members of the Arajs Kommando. He said he only briefly met the commando's leader, Viktor Arajs, who was charged in 1948 with mass killings and later sentenced by a German court to life in prison. Arajs died in jail.

Nazi-hunters want action on war suspect in Britain
Monday 10 January 2000
Christine Hauser JERUSALEM, Jan 10 (Reuters) - The Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Centre said on Monday it wanted Britain to enact a law stripping a suspected Nazi war criminal of his citizenship and deporting him to Lithuania to stand trial. "There is no doubt in our minds that Antanas Gecas is a Nazi war criminal," Efraim Zuroff, Israeli director of the institute, told Reuters. "With the deportation of Gecas the possibility rose that he could be sent back to Lithuania. At the same time we are pursuing the possibility of finding other evidence." Last year the centre said in a statement that Gecas had served as an officer in a Lithuanian police battalion which "actively participated in the persecution and murder of thousands of Lithuanian Jews (during World War Two)." It had asked Lithuania to take "immediate action" and either seek his extradition or put him on trial in his absence. Gecas, an 83-year-old retired mining engineer in Britain, sued for libel in 1994 after a television report accused him of killing Jews during World War Two. He lost his case when the judge ruled that he was satisfied Gecas was a mass murderer, but said there was not enough evidence to try him for war crimes. Zuroff said the centre wanted Britain to adopt a denaturalisation and deportation law such as one used in the United States and Canada for suspected war criminals. PROSECUTION DIFFICULT MANY YEARS ON "We feel it will make a big difference. It will considerably increase the number of people who will face Justice," he said. "We are encountering an extremely difficult situation in which Nazi war criminals in Britain and other countries escape justice because of the difficulties in prosecution so many years after," he said. Not one Lithuanian Nazi war criminal has ever been tried in independent Lithuania, the centre has said. Zuroff said at least nine Nazi collaborators had been deported to Lithuania from the United States and two had been indicted but not tried because Lithuania said they were medically unfit. Zuroff said Israel and the United States had put pressure on Lithuania to try suspected Nazi war criminals. "We are gambling this case (Gecas) will work," he said. The Wiesenthal Centre says more than 96 percent of the 220,000 Jews who lived in Lithuania during the Nazi occupation were murdered in the Holocaust, in many cases by Lithuanian collaborators. Earlier on Monday, Australia refused to bow to pressure and reopen a probe into suspected Nazi war criminal Konrad Kalejs, who returned to Australia last week after being forced out of Britain. It
said its police were still studying whether information supplied by Britain constituted new evidence. Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson said people should come forward if they believed they had strong new evidence against Kalejs, 86, who was born in Latvia but is now an Australian citizen. Kalejs has denied allegations that he played an active role in a Nazi-run Latvian killing squad blamed for the deaths of 30,000 civilians during World War Two.

Costa Rica says it respecting law in Nazi case

01/06/00

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Jan 6 (Reuters) - Under fire from a Jewish group abroad, Costa Rica on Thursday defended its decision not to deport an alleged Nazi war criminal, saying it had no extradition request from any foreign country.

The New York-based World Jewish Congress (WJC) on Wednesday accused the Central American country of sheltering Bohdan Koziy, a 77-year-old Ukrainian accused of executing a 4-year-old Jewish girl in Ukraine during the Second World War.

The WJC said Costa Rica was breaking international war crimes laws and would make formal charges against the country at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva in the coming weeks. But Costa Rican Security Minister Rogelio Ramos said "we don't even know where to send him because no country is requesting him."

"We are going to act strictly in accordance with the law," he said.

Costa Rica said it previously rejected a 1988 extradition request by the former Soviet Union because the USSR would not rule out the death penalty for Koziy. Since then, it has not received a formal extradition request from any other country.

Koziy went to the United States in 1949, won citizenship in 1956, but was stripped of it in 1982 after a trial that exposed his atrocities.

Witnesses at the trial in Florida described how he murdered a Jewish family, including the girl he shot at point blank range as she pleaded for her life outside a police station in Lysiec, Ukraine, in 1943. German courts also found that he personally committed these crimes.

The U.S. Justice Department won a court order for his deportation in 1984 but he fled to Costa Rica.

More war crime suspects are living in the UK

The Independant

By Sophie Goodchild, Home Affairs Correspondent

9 January 2000

At least two prominent Nazi war crime suspects are living in Britain, according to documents seen by the Independent on Sunday. Four others have died in the past five years without having faced prosecution.

The alleged war criminals were among 90,000 "displaced persons" - including the entire Ukrainian 14th Waffen-SS Division - allowed into Britain from Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War.

Many Nazis allowed in had been camp guards and are estimated to have been responsible for the deaths of at least three-quarters of a million people.

Those understood to be still alive include Lev Manitski, who is accused of being involved in mass executions of prisoners at a death camp in 1943. He is one of 34 Ukrainians wanted by authorities in the former Soviet Union whom the Government has refused to deport.

Last known to be living in Peterborough, he has always denied charges of mass murder. But archive documents
show he was trained in how to run concentration camps at a special SS centre allegedly attended by John Demjanjuk, whose trial for alleged murders at the Treblinka camp collapsed in Israel two years ago.

Another suspected war criminal is Julija Valvars, who allegedly wrote propaganda inciting hatred against Jews, and was last known to be living in Leeds. His name was on a list of 17 war-crime suspects living in Britain which was compiled by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles and given to the Home Office in 1987.

Those who have died in recent years include Antas Derzinskas, who was accused of shooting at least 30 Jews.

Eyewitness statements claim that he also helped to transport about 70 Jewish women and children to their deaths in the Lithuanian village of Gruzdiai. This evidence was presented to the Home Office by the anti-fascist magazine Searchlight, which tracked him down to his home in Nottingham. The former member of the Lithuanian Auxiliary Police died in 1998.

Another British citizen was Hardis Svikaris, who was joint second-in-command with Konrad Kalejs of the Arajs Kommando unit. An investigation by the War Crimes Unit at Scotland Yard concluded that there was not enough evidence against him. He died in 1996.

The other two were Janis Andrins-Andrups, accused of being a Gestapo informer, and August Abakuks, the alleged chief of administration under the Nazi occupation of Latvia. Both died in London in 1994.

Last night, anti-Nazi war-crime campaigners demanded that those still alive be brought to trial. Lord Janner, former secretary of the Parliamentary War Crimes Group, said it was "horrendous" that so many had already evaded justice. "But by definition most of their victims are now dead and most of those who can give evidence were themselves collaborators," he said.

John Mendelsohn, former director of the Inter-Parliamentary Council Against Anti-Semitism, said: "People should not evade justice because of an accident of location or position. Something is starting to happen but many have already evaded justice and it's an imperfect process."

Gerry Gable, publisher of Searchlight magazine, blamed British intelligence services for allowing Nazi war criminals into the country. "These people have been protected because of the arrangement British intelligence had with Nazi death squads at the end of the war," he said. "When you look at the memorials to the thousands of children who died, you wonder who is looking out for their memory."

Poles May Bar Payments for Postwar Acts
Panel Narrows Definition Of Who May Be Compensated

By Peter Finn
Washington Post Foreign Service
Saturday, January 8, 2000; Page A13

WARSAW, Jan. 7-In a move likely to strain Poland's relations with both Jews and the Polish diaspora, a parliamentary committee has voted to exclude anyone who is not currently both a Polish citizen and a resident of the country from receiving compensation for property seized by Communist authorities after World War II.

Poland is alone among East European countries in not passing a law on the return of private property that was nationalized after 1945. Restitution bills failed in Parliament in 1991 and 1993.

Late last year, the Solidarity-led coalition government proposed a law that would compensate people who were Polish citizens at the time their property was seized--a group that would include tens of thousands of Polish Jews and Roman Catholics who fled to the United States, Canada, Western Europe and Israel after the war.
But a parliamentary committee, including members from Solidarity, this week amended the proposed law, limiting the right to recover nationalized property or obtain any financial compensation to current Polish citizens who have lived in the country for the past five years.

It raises the prospect of a third failure in 10 years to deal with restitution, complicating Poland's negotiations to join the European Union and roiling Poland's relations with the Jewish community and the United States, which is monitoring the issue closely because it affects a large number of U.S. citizens.

"I'm afraid that Poland's image will be harmed by this," Deputy Treasury Minister Krzysztof Laszkiewicz said of the amendment.

Poland has been under increasing pressure to sort out property claims, with the European Union tying the issue to Poland's application for EU membership and American and British Jews filing class-action suits in the United States to force the return of property. The EU said international law requires Poland to recognize the property rights of both former citizens and Poles living abroad. Poland hopes to join the EU in 2003.

The government had proposed a broad, complicated package that would return property or partially compensate claimants with government bonds or shares in privatized enterprises. It vowed this week to fight for its original, more inclusive draft.

But it is unclear whether the government's bill can muster a parliamentary majority if a rump element within Solidarity joins the former Communist Party and the Peasant's Party to vote it down. At the same time, a majority of Solidarity and its coalition partner, Freedom Union, is unlikely to support the amended bill.

"The amendment is fundamentally an anti-American act aimed directly against Polish Americans and Jewish Americans," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress. "Citizenship and residency requirements are anti-democratic actions. This is a stain on the burgeoning democracy that is Poland."

The Polish-American Congress also said it was angry about the amendment.

According to the Polish treasury department, the Communist government nationalized or seized nearly $50 billion worth of property after 1945, and the government estimates that it faces at least 170,000 claims from former owners or their descendants. The government's original proposal would have allowed the heirs of Polish citizens to file claims, but only in Polish courts--a move designed to preempt class-action suits filed in other countries.

Jewish groups also have argued that any restitution bill should extend back to 1939 to exclude the possibility that someone who was given property by the Nazis and subsequently lost it to the Communists would have a stronger legal claim than the prewar owner.

The proposed law as it stands, however, would compensate individuals only if they could prove that the Communist government violated its own nationalization laws in postwar Poland when it seized property--a provision that is more liberal than it might appear because the Communists paid little attention to their own laws.

Poland proposes new Jewish property restrictions
Monday, January 10, 2000

Yair Sheleg  A new recommendation by a parliamentary committee in Poland could prevent Polish Jews from claiming their share of billions of dollars of private property confiscated during the Communist regime, in the estimate of a local attorney. Aryeh Edelist, the chairman of the Association for the Restitution of Private Jewish Property in Poland, told Ha'aretz that the recommendation applies only to real estate because the organization
has waived its right to make commercial and industrial claims. The recommendation would limit the return of private property solely to Jews who have been residents and citizens of Poland during the past five years. The latest proposal is even more restrictive than the current regulations, which provide for compensation only for property confiscated by the Communist regime from 1946 on, and not for property seized by the Nazis during World War II.

Bank Austria/Creditanstalt Announce Court’s Approval of Holocaust Claims Settlement

*Updated 11:09 AM ET January 6, 2000*

NEW YORK, Jan. 6 /PRNewswire/ -- Bank Austria and its wholly owned subsidiary, Creditanstalt, today announced that United States District Court Judge Shirley Wohl Kram has approved a $40 million settlement of class-action claims brought against the banks by Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution.

In connection with the approval of the settlement by Judge Kram, Bank Austria and Creditanstalt issued the following statement reiterating their position in this matter:

"Bank Austria and Creditanstalt unreservedly accept moral responsibility for the activities carried out by the Banks and/or predecessors during the Holocaust era, such as their role in the Aryanization of Jewish property, and express their profound regret for such actions.

"The Banks are committed to an open and transparent review of their archives in order to lead to a greater understanding of the history of this period."

Bank Austria, Austria’s largest bank, was created in 1991. The claims at issue in the settlement stem from actions taken during the Nazi period by Landerbank, which in 1991 was merged into Bank Austria, and Creditanstalt, which Bank Austria acquired late in 1997.

The settlement, essentially in the form approved today, was presented to Judge Kram on May 26, 1999, by attorneys for Bank Austria and the plaintiffs. The settlement subsequently was amended and later endorsed by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc., and the World Jewish Congress.

"This is an historic event" said Gerhard Randa, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Bank Austria, "marking the first time that any of the Holocaust-related claims cases has reached a concluded settlement. We sincerely hope that the victims of the Nazi regime who are the beneficiaries of this settlement may find a measure of solace in this tangible acknowledgment of moral responsibility for the terrible events they suffered more than a half-century ago."

Major features of the settlement include:

- Creation of a $30 million Restitution Fund to pay claims and, from any balance remaining after the payment of all claims, to fund humanitarian projects for the assistance or remembrance of victims of Nazi persecution.

- Creation of an archive of bank records for the period 1938 through 1945, when the bank was under the control of German entities, including Dresdner Bank, Deutsche Bank and the conglomerate VIAG, and official agencies of the Nazi Reich.

- Assignment to the plaintiffs of all claims that Bank Austria itself might have against the present-day German government and German entities.
Releasing Bank Austria and Creditanstalt from all future claims of any sort arising from the conduct of their predecessor institutions during the period of Nazi rule in Austria.

The agreement reserves up to $10 million from the total $40 million for costs of administering the settlement, including creation of the archive, costs of the historical commission, publishing the notice of settlement around the world, "on account" payment of claims that the banks have been making since October of 1998, and the plaintiffs' attorneys' fees. The $40 million settlement was recorded in Bank Austria's 1998 financial results.

In a separate agreement not part of the court-ordered settlement, Bank Austria and Creditanstalt have agreed to consider funding humanitarian projects to be proposed to them by the Claims Conference specifically for the benefit of victims of Nazi persecution from Austria, up to a total of $5 million.

**FOCUS-Settlement of Bank Austria holocaust suits**

*Updated 12:47 PM ET January 6, 2000*

By Gail Appleson, Law Correspondent

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A federal judge Thursday approved a $40 million settlement of Holocaust survivors' claims against Bank Austria and its Creditanstalt unit in the first concluded U.S. accord of class action litigation over Nazi atrocities.

"The court finds that the settlement is fair, reasonable and adequate and it is approved in its entirety," said U.S. District Judge Shirley Wohl Kram in her order filed in Manhattan federal court.

She said the most common complaint from survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution concerned the amount of the settlement fund with 15 out of 18 objectors arguing the $40 million was inadequate.

"However, it is unlikely that any sum of money, no matter how large, could ever be thought of as righting the wrongs committed during the Holocaust," she said.

Kram said the accord was not aimed at compensating all victims of Nazi persecution, "only those with the required nexus to the Austrian Banks."

The judge said the settlement could not be evaluated in a vacuum and the plaintiffs faced a substantial risk of never recovering any money if the cases had to go to trial.

Bank Austria, Austria's largest bank, was created in 1991. The claims at issue in the settlement stemmed from actions taken during the Nazi period by Landesbank, which in 1991 was merged into Bank Austria, and Creditanstalt, which Bank Austria acquired late in 1997.

The accord released Bank Austria and Creditanstalt from all future claims arising from the conduct of their predecessor institutions during the period of Nazi rule in Austria. The $40 million settlement was recorded in Bank Austria's 1998 financial results.

A fairness hearing on the settlement was held before the judge in May. Bank Austria said the ruling marked the first concluded settlement of any Holocaust-related claims cases.

A proposed $1.25-billion claims settlement with Swiss banks is pending in Brooklyn federal court. A hearing on that accord was held in November and U.S. District Judge Edward Korman, who played a major role in fashioning the 1998 proposal, has taken the matter under advisement.

"Bank Austria and Creditanstalt unreservedly accept moral responsibility for the activities carried out by the banks and/or predecessors during the Holocaust era, such as their role in the Aryanization of Jewish property..."
"and express their profound regret for such actions," the banks said in a statement.

"The banks are committed to an open and transparent review of their archives in order to lead to a greater understanding of the history of this period."

The New York-based World Jewish Congress (WJC), which has led efforts to achieve restitution for Jewish victims of Nazi Germany and the countries it occupied during World War II, said it "particularly welcomed" Bank Austria’s apology.

"For us moral restitution was as important as financial restitution," WJC spokesman Elan Steinberg said.

The heart of the settlement was a $30 million restitution fund to pay claims. If any funds remain after claims are paid, they will be used to finance humanitarian projects for the assistance of remembrance of victims of Nazi persecution.

The accord also provided for creation of an archive of bank records for the period 1938 through 1945, when the bank was under the control of German entities, including Dresdner Bank, Deutsche Bank and the conglomerate VIAG, and official agencies of the Nazi Reich.

Another provision of the settlement allowed the plaintiffs to pursue any claims that Bank Austria itself might have against the current German government and German entities.

"We can now pursue other sectors of Austrian industry for slave labor claims and Aryanization as well as deal with the Austrian government for a final resolution of outstanding reparations issues," Steinberg said.

The WJC said a previous agreement would effectively have released all Austrian industries from paying restitution, but the group could now investigate many companies who used Jews as slave laborers.

**FOCUS-Settlement of Bank Austria holocaust suits**

01/06/00

(Adds WJC comments, pending Swiss bank case)

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Insurance Commissioner Senn to Hold Seattle Hearing to Review Compliance With State Holocaust-Insurance Law

Fact-Finding Hearing Before Insurance Commissioner Senn 1-3 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 13) 900 Fourth Avenue, Room 2400, Seattle, Wash.

Updated 7:28 PM ET January 7, 2000

SEATTLE (BUSINESS WIRE) - State Insurance Commissioner Deborah Senn will hold a public hearing in Seattle next week to hear directly from insurance companies linked to the international effort to recover insurance claims that were denied to Holocaust survivors and heirs of Holocaust victims at the end of World War II. The hearing, which will include testimony by Holocaust survivors, will begin Thursday (January 13) at 1 p.m. in the Bank of California Building in downtown Seattle. Washington's Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act of 1999 requires all insurance companies to provide lists of all policyholders linked to Holocaust Era coverage in Europe. The law also directs carriers to report on the status of efforts to research that period and identify survivors or victims of the Holocaust who may have been denied coverage. The law specifically provides a "safe harbor" exemption from those requirements for those European insurance conglomerates that have been working with an International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims formed a year ago. However, the law's "safe harbor" expired as of January 1, 2000, and can only be extended by action of the Insurance Commissioner. Representatives of those companies will appear at the hearing to answer questions from Commissioner Senn and report on their actions to resolve unpaid claims estimated to total in the billions of dollars. The five companies working with the Commission, headed by former Secretary of State Lawrence
Eagleburger, are Allianz AG (Germany), Axa (France), Assicurazioni Generali (Italy), Zurich and Winterthur (Switzerland). Survivors, family members, and other interested parties are welcome to attend the public hearing. Members of the public also will have the opportunity to testify before the Commissioner.

Commissioner Senn said several hundred survivors and their families made their homes in Washington state after World War II. A significant number of those families have filed claims with her office. "We still need to reach the families and heirs of Washington Holocaust survivors and victims who have not yet contacted my staff," Commissioner Senn said. "Anyone who is aware of a claim or interested in additional information should contact my office." Any Washington state resident who wishes to inquire about filing a Holocaust-related claim can contact Commissioner Senn's Holocaust Survivors Assistance Office via a toll-free phone line, 888/606-9622. NOTE: Washington state residents may obtain copies of Commissioner Senn's "Summary Report on the NAIC Holocaust & Insurance Working Group" or a subsequent report on legal issues involved ("Private Insurance and Unpaid Holocaust Era Claims") by calling the Consumer Hot Line at 800/562-6900. Both reports are also posted on Commissioner's web site at <http://www.insurance.wa.gov> Public Affairs and Consumer Education Office of the Insurance Commissioner P.O. Box 40255, Olympia, Wash. 98504-0255 Web Page: <http://www.insurance.wa.gov> Contact: Office of the Insurance Commissioner Jim Stevenson, 360/586-4422 or Barbara Stenson, 360/664-2879 or Sandy Mealing, 360/586-1002

Nazi Labor Lawyer Sets Deadline on Holocaust Fund

Clifford Coonan
01/08/00

BERLIN (Reuters) - A lawyer representing Nazi-era slave laborers set German industry a three-week deadline on Saturday to finalize details of a five billion mark ($2.63 billion) compensation fund.

"We won't wait any longer than three weeks. We will take it to the courts after that," Michael Witti said on NDR radio.

Germany sealed a historic compensation agreement with victims' representatives last month, ending nearly a year of often bitter talks. Under the deal, the government and industry would each contribute five billion marks to a fund to be distributed to survivors from the middle of this year.

A spokesman for firms taking part in the fund pledged the first payments would be made this summer and neither legal procedures nor bureaucracy would be allowed to stand in the way.

"If necessary we will make some of the payments to particularly needy recipients in cash," Wolfgang Gibowski told the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper.

FIRMS NEED TO JOIN

But to date only about two billion marks have been raised from industry although the number of companies participating in the fund has risen to 110 from 65 in early December.

Many firms are unwilling to join the fund before they are sure that they will be protected from future lawsuits.

The chairman of Henkel KGaA, a leading maker of household chemicals, said on Friday companies taking part in the fund would need up to eight weeks to get the money together.

"I think we will get the sum together, but we will need a lot of discussion to really gather the funds. I expect it to take between four and eight weeks," said Hans-Dietrich Winkhaus.

The companies in the fund include DaimlerChrysler AG, Siemens AG, Volkswagen AG and Deutsche Bank AG.

The main beneficiaries will be some 240,000 elderly concentration camp survivors, many of them Jewish, who were used as slaves expected to be worked to death, and over a million people, mainly Slavs, forced to work in industry and farming.

FOCUS-German Holocaust fund short of target

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BERLIN, Jan 7 (Reuters) - The head of a leading German chemicals firm said on Friday that companies taking part in a five-billion-mark ($2.6 billion) fund to compensate Nazi-era slaves would need up to eight weeks to get the money together.

Hans-Dietrich Winkhaus, management board chairman of the German household chemical maker Henkel KGaA said many firms were still holding off on joining the fund.

They would not join before they were sure that they would be protected from future lawsuits and until a final figure had been agreed, Winkhaus said in an interview with WDR radio. "I think that we will get the sum together, but we will need a lot of discussion to really gather the funds together. I expect it to take between four and eight weeks," he said.

German industry and government reached an historic agreement last month under which they would each contribute five billion marks into a fund that will be distributed starting in mid-2000 to the elderly survivors.

Tourism and industrial group Preussag AG said earlier on Friday that it was joining the fund.

Preussag spokesman Frank Laurich told Reuters that although it was not yet clear whether or to what extent Preussag had used slave labour, the company was taking part "to accept the general responsibility."

A spokesman for the fund was quoted on Friday as saying that the firms had fallen short of that goal so far.

Wolfgang Gibowski told the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper in an interview that only about two billion marks had been raised so far from industry. He said 110 companies had joined the fund, up from 65 in early December.

MORE FIRMS SHOULD JOIN THE FUND

"We are still far away from reaching our goal," Gibowski told the newspaper. "The number of participants has to be considerably increased by the start of the summer."

Fund officials were not immediately available to comment to Reuters.

The government and the German firms, including some of the country's best known corporate names, agreed to contribute in return for assurances that the companies would face no further legal action in the United States, the main setting for claims against them.

Some of the companies in the fund include DaimlerChrysler AG, Siemens AG, Volkswagen AG, and Deutsche Bank AG.

The main beneficiaries will be some 240,000 aged concentration camp survivors, many of them Jewish, who were used as slaves expected to be worked to death, and over a million people, mainly Slavs, forced to work in industry and farming.

Germany has already paid out more than $60 billion in compensation since World War Two and hopes the deal clinched in the final weeks of the 20th century can finally settle its account with the victims of its Nazi past.

On Thursday, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, a leading Jewish group, had expressed disquiet over German plans for compensating the slave labourers, saying it would oppose any reduction of pay-outs to those already compensated under other schemes.

A draft of the proposed legislation indicated that previous compensation payments would be "taken into consideration."

Friday January 7 11:04 AM ET Germany Expects Cos. To Join Fund BERLIN (AP) - Despite a sluggish start, the German government remains confident that businesses will come up with their half of a $5.3 billion fund for compensating Nazi-era slave and forced laborers, a spokesman said Friday. Three weeks after government and industry agreed with victims' representatives on the size of the proposed fund, companies have pledged less than half the $2.7 billion that they are to contribute. The German government is to put up the other half. Uwe-Karsten Heye, spokesman for Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, said at a news conference that the government is confident that industry will keep its promise. Wolfgang Gibowski, spokesman for German companies participating in the fund, said "it is now important that the willingness grows and (more) firms quickly join." He added that he was optimistic about the outcome of a meeting of industry
leaders set for next week. The number of companies that have announced their participation in the fund grew last month from 16 to more than 100. Electricity and tourism concern Preussag, which has annual sales of $17.2 billion, on Friday became the 111th to join. Leading the way in agreeing to join the fund last year were such industrial giants as Volkswagen, Siemens and DaimlerChrysler. But while a basic agreement on the fund has been reached, problems abound on how it is to work. Victims groups say a proposal to subtract compensation for imprisonment or other suffering already made to some Holocaust victims is unacceptable. They have threatened not to withdraw class-action lawsuits for compensation filed in the United States, as agreed to in December. But the government's chief representative for the fund, Otto Lambsdorff, said this week that the idea of subtracting earlier compensation was based on "a basic feeling of justice."

Mon, 10 Jan 2000, 11:16am EST

Guide Helps Holocaust Victims File for Claims: Personal Wealth

Bloomberg

By Josh P. Hamilton

Guide Helps Holocaust Victims File for Claims: Personal Wealth

(For a list of Holocaust compensation plans and related information, type TNI HOLOCAUST LAW 11/10/99.)

New York, Nov. 10 (Bloomberg) -- In the decade since the fall of the Berlin Wall, compensation programs for the 800,000 living survivors of the Holocaust have multiplied. Getting compensation hasn't been easy, though.

To help the victims and their heirs understand what they might qualify for, and how to make claims, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc., a New York-based nonprofit group, published a 50-page booklet yesterday, "Guide to Compensation and Restitution for Holocaust Survivors."

The booklet is primarily written for the 180,000 survivors who reside in the U.S. who may be eligible for compensation, including one-time payments of 5,000 deutsche marks ($2,670) or monthly distributions of DM500 for life from the German government. There is also information about restitution of lost property and pending claims against German and Swiss companies.

"For many survivors, these restitution programs are symbolic; for others, the funds can make a critical difference in their lives," said Gideon Taylor, executive vice president of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims, also known as the Claims Conference. "This guide is intended for survivors, aid organizations and the children and grandchildren of survivors, to know what is available and what may become available." The guide contains information for non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, as well.

Many Holocaust victims are overwhelmed by the number of new lawsuits and compensation claims, ranging from attempts to recover hoarded bank deposits to demands for survivors of slave labor camps, groups working with the survivors say. Many survivors don't know how to file claims, or if they are eligible to do so.

A New Urgency
More than 50 years after the end of World War II, financial claims against businesses and governments that profited from Adolf Hitler's extermination campaign against Europe's Jews have been energized partly because many of the survivors, with an average age of 81, are in greater need of financial and medical resources as they advance in years. Between 7 percent and 10 percent of them die each year.

Filing a claim can be daunting. Irene Hizme, 63, survived the medical experiments on twins by Nazi physician Joseph Mengele as a 7-year-old in the Auschwitz concentration camp and came to the U.S. where she became a biochemist and computer programmer before the effects of her internment put her in a wheelchair 10 years ago. Hizme attempted to fill out the six-page questionnaire for a settlement with Swiss banks accused of profiting from the Holocaust but couldn't complete it.

Filing Difficulties

"It's so confusing, and they ask such pointed questions it brings up a life of horror most survivors have spent a whole life trying to put away," Hizme said. "So, survivors don't even want to apply. I wrote back, 'I'm a Mengele twin, if I qualify, let me know.'"

Many survivors are reluctant to file claims because they don't believe they will get anything, said Florence Smeraldi, executive director of Blue Card Inc., a New York-based nonprofit group that assists Holocaust victims and their families around the country.

"Over the years, every time they've applied to a European bank or Swiss insurance company, they've been turned down flat," Smeraldi said.

With German and Swiss companies negotiating compensation for survivors, times may be changing, but the information hasn't reached survivors.

"There are a number of different compensations being negotiated but they are difficult for the people to understand, mostly because they haven't been explained well," said Roman Kent, chairman of the American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and a board member of the Claims Conference.

The Claims Conference booklet provides information on new and old compensation programs, and about government and private organizations that assist survivors in determining eligibility and assembling the required documentation.

On the Internet

The guide will be distributed to local Jewish social service agencies and is available from the Claims Conference through its Internet site at www.claimscon.org. A guide listing local resources for survivors living in Israel and other countries is expected to be published within a couple months, the Claims Conference said.

The complexity and cost of filing claims has been an obstacle, the Claims Conference said. Adherence to
eligibility criteria is monitored by the German government, and tends to be restrictive, the group said.

For example, a survivor of the Dachau concentration camp in Germany applying for a DM500 monthly pension from the German government must have lived behind the Iron Curtain when the original application deadline passed in the 1960s, provide proof of internment in the camp for at least six months, tax forms showing financial need, and have received little or no prior compensation, according to survivor assistance groups.

A Stipulation Removed

Many who survived the camps as children were denied compensation in the 1940s and early 1950s on grounds they didn't lose any earning capacity as a result of their experience. That stipulation has since been removed, and records from an earlier rejected claim can be used to substantiate a claim now, according to the New York-based United Restitution Organization, a nonprofit group mentioned in the Claims Conference guide.

The United Restitution Organization charges fees of $50 to $75 to clients who can afford to pay, plus 10 percent of one-time payments received or one month of pension benefits if the claim is successful.

United Restitution Organization lawyers also help survivors to recover confiscated or abandoned property in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland.

"There are people with a whole building in Warsaw, (and) that's worth doing," said Lilly Rosenbaum, manager of the United Restitution Organization's New York office. "But if they had a small shack in the country, the claim's worthless."

A $350 fee covers an initial investigation by a local lawyer to see if there's a viable case. After that, recoveries can cost thousands of dollars, URO said.
Katherine Page

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Alleged Nazi living in Britain faces Lithuanian investigation

Tuesday January 11 2000 Financial Times

STUART EIZENSTAT: The power of truth to heal
Germanis setting the right example by confronting its past horrors through its Holocaust compensation, says Stuart Eizenstat

Holocaust image Germany's agreement to increase the compensation fund for those who worked as slave and forced labourers during the Nazi era is a significant breakthrough in the long negotiations towards a conclusive settlement. Equally, it is part of a powerful movement for nations to confront their history, and to take moral responsibility for crimes committed against humanity and actions or inaction that grievously injured their own citizens and others.

Johannes Rau, Germany's president, eloquently expressed the spirit of this movement when he said of the compensation agreement: "I know that for many it is not really money that matters. What they want is for their suffering to be recognised as suffering, and for the injustice done to them to be named injustice. I pay tribute to all who were subjected to slave and forced labour under German rule and, in the name of the German people, beg forgiveness."

Following the agreement with five central European nations, the state of Israel, class action lawyers, Jewish survivor groups and German companies, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated starkly that Germany had been responsible for making the 20th century the "bloodiest" in history. Since it had "inflicted so much pain upon the world", he added, his nation had a great obligation to meet its responsibilities.

Germany has made serious efforts for more than four decades to do so, through the $60bn previously paid to Holocaust victims, billions in payments to others, its leadership for stability and peace in Europe, and its special relationship with Israel, a country born of the horror it caused. German companies will contribute half the money for the slave labour settlement. Some have also agreed to open their archives from the Nazi era to legitimate historical research. In so doing, they are taking steps towards setting an example of accountability, albeit under the pressure of class action suits.

More than a dozen other nations, from Argentina, Brazil and Spain to the Baltic states, have official commissions examining the role their governments played during the second world war.

Switzerland has published two hard-hitting reports: the first, on how Swiss banks helped the Nazis use stolen gold to keep their war machine going; the second, on how and why Swiss authorities closed the border to refugees attempting to flee Germany. The Swiss Federal Council accepted the recent refugee report with a statement of regret for its wartime behaviour. In France, the ongoing work of the Matteoli Commission, established by President Jacques Chirac, shows the government is willing to confront the ambiguities of its actions during the Vichy period.

When the facts are revealed, there may at first be embarrassment and even resentment over the digging up of such shameful events from the past. But after widespread public discussion, nations are strengthened by honestly confronting their past, absorbing its lessons, and taking affirmative steps to help the victims of injustice and promote tolerance in the future.
Although the Holocaust was a unique act of genocide, inquiries are increasingly being made into other grave injustices. The work of the Truth Commission is allowing South Africa to confront the raw experience of apartheid and those who committed horrors in its name - not for the purpose of punishment, but in the hope of reconciliation. Chile is seeking to uncover the fate of the thousands who disappeared under the Pinochet regime. Guatemala is looking into atrocities committed during its years of civil war. The US continues to award compensation of $20,000 per person to Japanese Americans who were taken from their homes and forced to live in guarded camps during the second world war. Each step taken testifies to the healing power of the truth.

Violations of human rights today are no longer considered solely internal matters. The international community has a voice - whether it is in Rwanda, East Timor, Iraq or the Balkans. Indeed, a commitment to avoid another genocide in Europe was one of the factors in Nato's intervention to stop the Serb atrocities against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

It is not hard to understand why, 55 years after the liberation of the death camps, the Holocaust still has such resonance. It addresses the eternal questions of human behaviour: why do people hate? How can they remain indifferent in the presence of evil? What can be done to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again?

It is not enough to examine mistakes of the past; we must absorb their lessons and act on them in the future. As long as crimes against humanity continue, remembrance of the Holocaust and suffering perpetrated by the Nazis is essential. By its recent actions, Germany has set an example that can be followed by all nations.

The author is the deputy secretary of the US Treasury Department and Special Representative for Holocaust Issues.

January 12, 2000

Trial opens in Holocaust libel suit  By Sharon SadehHa'aretz Correspondent  LONDON -

The libel suit initiated by controversial British historian David Irving against an American historian who called him "a dangerous spokesman for Holocaust denial" began yesterday with Irving declaring, "For years I have turned the other cheek. No more. Deborah Lipstadt of Emory University in Atlanta had called Irving "a dangerous spokesman for Holocaust denial." Irving claims that Lipstadt's book, published in 1994, irreversibly destroyed his career and that Lipstadt and Penguin Books, which is also being sued by Irving, are part of "an organized international effort" to destroy his reputation as a historian. Irving, who specializes in the study of World War II, has published two books, "Hitler's War," and "Goebbels: The Mastermind of the Third Reich." As the trial opened in the High Court of London, Irwin claimed, "By virtue of the activities of the defendants, I have, since 1996, seen one fearful, publisher after another falling away from me, declining to reprint my works, refusing to accept new commissions and turning their backs on me when I approach." Irving, 62, who is representing himself, told the judge that he had once earned about 100,000 pounds sterling a year in royalties, but that the actions of the defendants had caused him "real financial damage." Irving said that Lipstadt's book, "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," accused him of denying the Holocaust, distorting documents and statistics to serve his own ideological ends, drawing unacceptable historical conclusions and knowingly joining with extremists. "Far from being a Holocaust denier, all I want is to draw attention to major aspects of history - to describe them. I have selflessly done vital historical research. No person in full command of his mental faculties can deny that the tragedy actually happened, however much we dissident historians may wish to quibble about the means, the scale, the dates and other minutiae." The attorney representing Penguin and Lipstadt, Richard Rampton, rejected these claims, terming Irving "a distorter of history, a liar and a Holocaust denier." He maintained that Irving denied the existence of a systematic plan of the Nazis to annihilate the Jews of Europe, that he denied that the gas chambers were used to execute this plan and that he harbored extreme views that knowingly presented a distorted view of history. The trial is expected to last 12 weeks without interruption and will not be held before a jury. Both sides agreed that because of the huge volume of documents involved, it would be preferable for the case to be heard before a judge. Hunters want UK man  In another matter related to the Holocaust, the Simon Weisenthal Center appealed yesterday to British Home Secretary Jack Straw, requesting that he revoke the citizenship of Antanas Gecas, a British citizen of Lithuanian extraction living in Edinburgh, and deport him from Britain. According to Efraim Zuroff, the
director of the Simon Weisenthal Center in Jerusalem, Gecas, who arrived in Britain in the late 1940s, has admitted to U.S. investigators that he had served in the battalion of the Latvian security police that murdered tens of thousands of citizens, most of whom were Jews, in Lithuania and Belorussia.
If Irving wins, analysts say, it could give credibility to Holocaust revisionism at a time when those who witnessed the horrors themselves are dying out.


Lipstadt has a daunting task ahead of her. Under British law, the burden of proof is squarely on her and her publisher to show that Irving is indeed a deliberate distorter of events in World War II.

Irving, who is representing himself, suggested in his opening argument that beyond his claims against Lipstadt, there was an international Jewish conspiracy to destroy him.

Irving claims that Lipstadt defamed him by alleging that his writing "applauds the internment of Jews in Nazi concentration camps" and that he is "an Adolf Hitler partisan who wears blinkers and skews documents and misrepresents data in order to reach untenable conclusions."

In his opening statement, Rampton declared, "Lies may take various forms and may as-often consist of suppression or omission as of falsehood and invention, but in the end all forms of lying converge into a single definition: willful, deliberate misstatement of the facts."

Irving, he contended, had employed "many different means to falsify history - invention, misquotation, suppression, distortion, manipulation and, not least, mistranslation."

Moreover, Rampton told the austere and somber courtroom, the lies that Irving had told concern the destruction of the Jews by the Nazis during World War II and Hitler's role in that catastrophe - "or, as Irving would have it, alleged catastrophe."

It was, he said, "an area of history which requires any writer or researcher to be particularly careful of the truth."

Irving, he continued bluntly, is a Holocaust denier: "By this I mean he denies that the Nazis planned and carried out the systematic murder of millions of Jews - in particular, though by no means exclusively, by the use of homicidal gas chambers, and in particular, though by no means exclusively, at Auschwitz."

As Irving almost visibly seethed, Rampton recalled a speech Irving had given to an audience in Calgary, Alberta, in September 1991, a speech, he said, that "conveys a message about his true views and attitudes."

"I don't see any reason to be tasteful about Auschwitz," Rampton quoted Irving as saying. "It's baloney. It's a legend.

"Once we admit the fact that it was a brutal slave labor camp and a large number of people did die, as large numbers of people died elsewhere in the war, why believe the rest of the baloney?"

"I say quite tastelessly, in fact, that more women died on the back seat of Edward Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick than ever died in a gas chamber in Auschwitz."

Wearing a navy-blue pinstriped suit and gray tie, Irving claimed that Lipstadt's assault on his integrity had caused "very real damage to my professional existence."

In his long and rambling opening statement, which took up most of the first day's proceedings, Irving, author of 30 books on World War II, vehemently denied that he was a Holocaust denier or an anti-Semite.

Some of his best friends have been Jewish, he said, as he portrayed himself as the victim of an international Jewish conspiracy that has monitored him in an attempt to strip him of his credibility and reputation and ultimately destroy him.
Lipstadt and Penguin were not alone "in their determination to destroy my career and to vandalize my legitimacy as a historian. They were part of an organized international endeavor at achieving precisely that.

"I have seen the papers. I have copies of the documents. I will show them to this court. I know how they did it and I now know why."

He alleged that in 1992 he had been expelled from Canada - he has also been banned from Germany, Austria, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa - on the basis of documents "blackening my name" which had been handed to Canadian authorities by "an unofficial body based in London" - a reference to the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

He also attacked the Anti-Defamation League and said he would present a document to the court "which reveals quite unabashedly how they tried to pressure television producers to cancel invitations to me."

Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, responded to these charges by saying it is not surprising that Irving is relying on conspiracy theories, adding that if "we have publicly called him a bigot, a pseudo-historian, Holocaust denier and anti-Semite, if that has led someone to doubt his credentials or decide one way or another how to deal with him, there's nothing for me to apologize for."

Irving said he would be presenting expert evidence from a professor of sociology at a leading American university on "the relationship between the world's Jewish communities and the rest of us."

"The Jewish community, their fame and fortunes, play a central role in these proceedings," he continued.

"I finally realized that I was the target of a hidden international attempt to exclude me, if that could be done, from publishing further works of history."

He continued: "It appears that these bodies, which are also embedded in our society in Britain and elsewhere, have seen their task, unbidden, as being to spy upon members of our society, maintain dossiers on us all, and to deploy those dossiers when necessary to smite those of us of whom they disapprove."

These "disturbing and sleazy" dossiers, he said, were explicitly designed "to hold such material on the subjects' personal lives, criminal records, credit delinquencies, marital difficulties, dietary habits and even sexual proclivities."

"It is not anti-Semitic to reveal this," he insisted. "The spying and smearing by these bodies goes on against Jew and non-Jew alike."

"I can think only of the wartime Gestapo and its offshoots in Nazi-occupied Europe as a body engaged in similar practices."

He was particularly incensed to be branded a Holocaust denier, which, he said, had the effect of creating "a pariah, an outcast from normal society. It is a verbal yellow star."

Lipstadt, at the epicenter of the storm, sat silent and impassive throughout the proceedings, in a black pants suit, with a vivid orange scarf draped over her shoulders.

As the drama swirled about her, she glanced at her laptop computer on the desk before her or at the judge, directly in front of her. She was surrounded by some 20 members of her defense team, seated in four rows behind her.

**JTA 01/12/00**

German legislation to ratify a $5.2 billion fund to compensate Holocaust-era slave laborers will be unacceptable if it denies funds to victims who have already received other compensation, said representatives for the laborers. A government spokeswoman responded that the issue would be discussed at the next set of
talks about how to distribute the fund, which was agreed to late last year. The talks are slated to take place in several weeks in Washington.

**German government seeks to calm Holocaust fund row**

*01/10/00*

BERLIN, Jan 10 (Reuters) - The German government said on Monday that a ten-billion-mark ($5.2 billion) fund to compensate Nazi-era slaves and forced labourers would also make payments to victims who had already received compensation.

The government was attempting to calm the fears of Jewish groups about a draft of proposed legislation for the fund which indicated that previous compensation payments would only be "taken into consideration."

German companies and the government reached an historic agreement last month under which they would each contribute five billion marks ($2.6 billion) into a fund that will be distributed starting in mid-2000 to the elderly survivors. Government spokeswoman Charima Reinhard said that former Jewish slaves who already received payouts would not be left empty-handed from the current fund.

"There will be appropriate compensation," Reinhard said, without giving any further details of how decisions would be made about possible payouts.

Reinhard was speaking after a closed-door meeting in Bonn, chaired by the government, to discuss various details of the fund.

A group of victims' lawyers said in an open letter to the government before the talks that they would not take part in the discussions as the talks were not legally binding and went against a number of agreements already struck between the two sides.

Munich-based lawyer Michael Witti said the talks were "superfluous" and a "waste of time."

On January 8, victims' lawyers gave the German government a three-week deadline to settle the final details of the fund.

Jewish groups have said in recent days that they would oppose any reduction of payouts to those already compensated under other schemes.

Wolfgang Gibowski, spokesman for German industry, said he remained optimistic that the final details of the fund could be ironed out.

Everyone wanted to emerge from the discussions feeling they had legal protection from the fund, Gibowski said.

"That is not a subject that should lead to ultimatums or to declarations of war," Gibowski told Reuters.

A spokesman for firms taking part in the fund pledged last week that the first payments would be made this summer and neither legal procedures nor bureaucracy would be allowed to stand in the way.

But to date only about two billion marks have been raised from industry although the number of companies participating in the fund rose to 110 from 65 in early December.

The main fund beneficiaries of the fund will be some 240,000 concentration camp survivors, many of them Jewish, who were used as slaves expected to be worked to death, and over a million people, mainly Slavs, forced to work in industry and farming.

Germany has already paid out more than $60 billion in compensation since World War Two and hopes the deal clinched in the final weeks of the 20th century can finally settle its account with the victims of its Nazi past.

The government said that earlier payments by German companies, including blue-chips such as carmaker Volkswagen AG and electronics giant Siemens AG, would be taken into account.

($1=1.909 German Mark)
Report cites Ford Motor Co-Nazi collaboration

NEW YORK, Jan 10 (Reuters) - Ford Motor Co., which has not joined scores of other companies in a $5.1 billion reparations agreement for factory slave labourers in Nazi Germany during the Second World War, collaborated more extensively with the Third Reich than previously thought, The Nation weekly newsmagazine reported.

It cited documents from lawsuits and wartime U.S. government and Army files at the National Archives in a report published in its Jan. 24 edition released this week.

The Nation reported that Ford profited from making military trucks for Hitler's army and that its cooperation continued until at least Aug. 1942, eight months after the United States entered the war. Ford Motor Co. said in a statement that the Dearborn, Michigan headquarters "lost all contact with and control over the plant during the war years, had no role in employing foreign labour and did not benefit from wartime operations."

Its German plant, Ford Werke in Cologne, was confiscated by the Nazis, the statement said.

Ford said its participation in the reparations agreement of last month led by the U.S. and German governments to provide relief for victims was "inappropriate" because "Ford did not do business in Germany during the war."

The statement said, however, that Ford wanted to participate in a humanitarian effort to help the victims and was working with the U.S. government on the best way to do that.

Last September, a federal court in New Jersey dismissed a forced labour lawsuit against Ford, ruling that it was an issue to be resolved between governments.

REPORT SAYS FORD HAD MAJORITY SHARE

The article, written by Ken Silverstein, said that the U.S. company controlled the majority share even after the Nazis seized it in 1942. It said that Ford also did business with the Germans in France following the Nazi occupation of 1940.

Ford began producing military vehicles before the war and by 1941 had stopped making passenger vehicles and was building military trucks, the report said. It said that as of 1942, about a third of the 350,000 trucks used by the German Army were Ford-made.

In December, the government of Germany and about 70 major corporations, including DaimlerChrysler AG, a subsidiary of General Motors Corp., Bayer, DaimlerChrysler AG, Volkswagen AG and BMW AG agreed to compensate slave labourers.

The German government and German companies negotiated the $5.1 billion agreement with governments, survivor groups and lawyers representing former workers. Meetings were scheduled this month to discuss how the money would be disbursed among the mostly Jewish survivors, whose average age is mid-80s.

The Colombus Dispatch

Teaching tolerance one goal of group

Holocaust council

Monday, January 10, 2000

By Nancy J. Smeltzer
Dispatch Staff Reporter

A program offered in some Columbus schools since 1995 also focuses on diversity.

Third-graders at Medary Elementary School recently learned about diversity by eating bread.

They sampled pita, a staple of the Middle East. They also tried matzo, a thin, unleavened bread that Jews eat during Passover.
"It was food for thought," said Jane O'Neil, their teacher. "Our kids don't always get that."

Diversity and tolerance are the objectives of a series of classes offered in some Columbus Public Schools by the Holocaust Education Council, which recently received $20,000 from the Columbus Foundation to continue the effort.

The money is to help teach the history and lessons of the Holocaust, the systematic slaying of more than 6 million European Jews by the Nazis before and during World War II.

The program was started in 1995 by children of Holocaust survivors who thought people should learn from the past.

They wanted children to see that diversity is good.

In recent years, Jews also have been concerned about historical revisionism -- a spate of books and articles alleging that the Holocaust never occurred or was exaggerated.

Program participants hope the lessons of the Holocaust will resonate with students.

"It's not just about the Holocaust, but it's what have we learned from it?" said Sandra Gitlitz, who heads the council and is its only paid employee.

"How can we treat people who are different? Especially in the Columbus Public Schools, we have many different cultures that are in there. Maybe some of the kids are dressing in their native costumes or can't eat a certain food because of their religion. We need to understand and enjoy the differences, not bully them.

"Hopefully, we're going to have children growing up who are tolerant adults."

The lesson taught by eating different breads was especially meaningful at Medary. English is the second language for many of the students, who come from 27 countries, O'Neil said. The children shared a common observation: "They're the same as you inside," she said.

The bulk of the council's annual budget, which is about $30,000, is spent on books for the schools. Other efforts throughout the year include four workshops for teachers. The next workshop will be held Jan. 26 and feature Bea Stadler of Cleveland. She will talk about the importance of teaching about the Holocaust.

Stadler, a member of the Ohio Council on Holocaust Education, served as a member of the educational advisory panel for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council in the mid-1980s.

The local council also has produced a video of testimonials by three Holocaust survivors who now live in the Columbus area.

Each year, it awards a fellowship for a three-week study of the Holocaust that starts in Poland and ends in Israel. The council also sends an elementary school teacher to Washington to visit the Holocaust Museum.

This school year, the council also sponsored a one-woman show about Anne Frank and the Holocaust called Through the Eyes of a Friend. The actress interacted with a video that was shown behind her.

"The Holocaust is devastating, but it is still interesting to learn about," Katy Houser, a student at Sherwood Middle School, wrote after seeing the show. "We all must study history so that this event is never repeated again."

"If I had to pick the most interesting topic that I have ever studied in school, it would have to be the Holocaust," wrote Denitra Tidwell, another Sherwood student.

Not all of the lessons from the Holocaust are appropriate for children, Gitlitz said. "There are other parts you
can discuss without bringing up the atrocities."

Lessons were developed for third-graders because that is the age when many children start commenting on differences between people, Gitlitz said, but they can be adapted for other grades.

Classroom educators can teach the lessons, which were written by Columbus schoolteachers. The council also will provide teachers.

"I know there's a lot of people who don't feel comfortable teaching the Holocaust, but that's what we're here to do," Gitlitz said.

Dispatch reporter Ruth E. Sternberg contributed to this story.

January 11, 2000
The Times

How Himmler fell under the spell of witches  FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

THE SS leader Heinrich Himmler was so obsessed with witchcraft that he looted 140,000 books on the subject from libraries across Europe and set up a unit to investigate and publicise the issue. The scope of Himmler's strange fascination has been disclosed in a book by a team of historical researchers in Germany. When a Poznan librarian stumbled on the witchcraft library in a baroque palace in Lower Silesia, he noted that several books had been marked on pages where tortures were described. He assumed that the SS chief was studying torture techniques. However, the authors, led by Sönke Lorenz, a Tübingen academic, argue that Himmler was trying to prove that the persecution of witches in the 17th century represented a kind of Holocaust of the German race carried out by the Roman Catholic Church. "The witch-hunting cost the German people hundreds of thousands of mothers and women, cruelly tortured and executed," Himmler is quoted as saying. The authors believe that he deployed his SS teams to discover traces of an old Germanic culture that survived the witch-hunts. The SS compiled a card index of 33,846 cases of burnings in Germany and as far afield as India and Mexico, in an attempt to prop up Himmler's thesis. His interest in the occult may have begun in 1928 when, as a chicken farmer, he married Margarete Boden, a Prussian landowner's daughter who dabbled in homeopathy, mesmerism and herbalism. In 1929, Hitler appointed him head of his 300-strong bodyguard, the black uniformed Schutzstaffel (SS). Eventually Himmler, a fanatical racial ideologist, stood at the head of a huge repressive machine including not only the SS, the Waffen SS and the Gestapo, but also the supervision of concentration camps. He oversaw the Lebensborn project aimed at creating a Nordic super race. Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Service, reported to his boss in 1939 that he had discovered the case of a witch called Margareth Himbler, burnt in Germany in 1629. The similarity of names encouraged Himmler's interest in rehabilitating German witches. The SS Amt VII, concerned with churches, Freemasons, liberals, emigrés and Marxists, was expanded to include witches. The ultimate aim was to publish a series of short books highlighting individual German witches and restoring some of their lost glamour. By April 1942 the project had at least a dozen themes, including "economic effects of witch trials" and "the intellectual foundation of the witch complex". Seminars sponsored by the SS earnestly discussed the biological implications for the German race of killing so many women.

Second look at Nazi loot  By Richard Z. Chesnoff (January 11) - We've been hit by a wave of restitution revisionism - the increasingly fashionable tendency among some Jewish intellectuals to scorn efforts to recoup assets stolen from Holocaust victims and their heirs as an unbecoming "desecration of memory."
Jonathan Tobin, one of the brighter young American Jewish journalists, worries, for example, that the rash of "grandstanding" on Swiss bank loot, Nazi gold, and stolen art is "distorting our view of the Holocaust." And in an embarrassing outburst, syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer attacked what he called this "grotesque scramble for money," something he cautioned will revive "Shylockian stereotypes." The latest disciple of this school of Jewish denial is no one less than Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of the prestigious New Republic and one of America's preeminent Jewish essayists. In a recent column, reprinted in New York newspapers under the title "Absolution Not for Sale," Wieseltier displayed much of the heartfelt emotion but little of the logic he usually offers his readers. Instead, he advised his mother, and anyone else who had survived the Holocaust, to "spit at" their applications for restitution and reject any compensation from Switzerland. Mr. Wieseltier's mother has a perfect right to "spit at" compensation; she would not be the first Holocaust victim to do so. But neither Ms. Wieseltier's son nor anyone else's child has the right to make that judgment for all other Holocaust survivors. As many as 400,000 of these survivors are still alive among us, most of them in their late 70s and early 80s. Some have rebuilt lives and even prospered. But many others, especially in the former Soviet bloc, have desperately limited means. Even in Israel and America there are aged survivors who must choose each month between paying rent or buying medicine. For these souls, even small amounts of money will make a significant difference. The battle for restitution has two flanks: It is first and foremost a struggle to enable aged survivors to live out their final years with some dignity - to provide desperately needed health insurance, for example. But it is also a battle, albeit a belated one, for historic justice: to make certain the record is set straight and to provide the world with a desperately needed moral lesson in this age when ethnic hatred is still the backdrop to murder and plunder. Time will never erase the crime. There is no question here of peddling absolution. Nor should there be anything but repugnance for that phalanx of Shoah-shyster class-action lawyers now seeking exorbitant fees for their services. The simmering battle among Jewish organizations for "a piece of the action" is also less than enthralling. As Elan Steinberg of the World Jewish Congress, which has been in the forefront of the restitution struggle, puts it: "No one should be making a profit from the Holocaust." But that doesn't justify a blanket denunciation of those seeking truth and justice in order to provide aid to survivors and their heirs and hopefully also generate financial backbone for future Jewish education and communal life. That alone would provide the ultimate answer to the Nazis and their willing helpers all across Europe: Jewish survival. It is cruelly clear that lives stolen can never be paid for. But seeking the return of at least part of what was stolen from those who were slaughtered is a matter of pure justice. And as the 13th century kabbalist Bahya Ben-Asher once wrote, "Where there is no justice, there is no peace." Of course, we could leave the money with the Swiss bankers who've sat on it for 50 years, or allow the French and Austrians to retain the looted paintings and precious books they've hoarded, or enable the Norwegians, Dutch, Croatians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, and others who profited from the Holocaust to keep the plunder they hold. It might relieve some intellectuals' misplaced discomfort. But it would not provide any moral high ground. In the end, doing nothing to fight for full restitution - something the world and the Jewish community failed to do for 55 years - is the real "threat to our memory." (The writer is author of the recently published Pack of Thieves: How Hitler & Europe Plundered the Jews & Committed the Greatest Theft in History.)

Jewish Life Seen Reviving in Germany

12:45 p.m. ET (1747 GMT) January 11, 2000

By Erik Kirschbaum

BERLIN - Just a few street corners north of where the remains of Adolf Hitler's bunker lie buried, the seeds of an unlikely revival of Jewish life in Germany have taken root.

As incredible as it may seem a half century after the Nazis tried to exterminate European Jewry, Germany now has the world's fastest-growing Jewish population.

An influx of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union has tripled the size of the vestigial community
that numbered just 29,000 in 1989 to 90,000 now officially registered. Some Jewish leaders say the actual number may be twice as high.

Jewish cultural centers, schools, restaurants and synagogues have opened in recent years in Berlin, many of them clustered around the New Synagogue on the Oranienburger Strasse boulevard less than a mile north of the bunker where Hitler killed himself in the final hours of World War II.

"It's a miracle," said Paul Spiegel, 62, who was elected Sunday as the new leader of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, a small but influential alliance of Jewish groups. "A strong Jewish community is rising again in Germany a half century after the Holocaust."

Jewish communities in Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg have expanded rapidly since Germany made special provisions for Jews to gain residency and citizenship and opened its gates to anyone with at least one Jewish parent.

Even in provincial towns such as Augsburg, Duesseldorf, Potsdam and Rostock, Jewish life has enjoyed an improbable renaissance thanks to the new immigration law. In Fulda, a small central town, the number of Jews has jumped from 12 to 600 in the last nine years.

Although Jews are dwarfed in the country of 82 million and the numbers are still small compared to the vibrant prewar Jewish population of 670,000, the immigrants have rejuvenated and simultaneously shaken up the tiny German Jewish community.

German Jews Work Hard to Integrate

"There is a lot of work to be done on integration," said Spiegel, a Duesseldorf theatrical agent who survived the Nazi terror by hiding on a farm. "The Jewish population has tripled. These are growth rates not seen anywhere else in the world."

Since 1990 about a million Jews have left the countries that made up the Soviet Union. The majority, some 900,000, have gone to Israel while Germany has taken in the second largest number of about 60,000, according to official data.

But Inge Runge, director of Berlin's Jewish Culture Center, estimates that more than 100,000 have moved to Germany since 1990 and between 15,000 and 20,000 arrive each year. Berlin’s Jewish population has doubled to about 20,000, she said.

"The true numbers are much higher than the number of Jews officially registered," said Runge, 57, who was born in New York and moved with her German-born parents to Berlin in 1949. Many don't want to be included on lists of Jews, she said.

Not everyone has greeted the immigrants with open arms. The village of Gollwitz, 40 miles west of Berlin, caused a national scandal in 1997 when local leaders blocked government plans to settle about 60 Russian Jews in an unused state-owned mansion.

Germany Seen as Stable Country for Eastern Europe Jews

Despite Germany's horrific history as the nation that carried out with grisly efficiency the murder of some 6 million European Jews, thousands of Jews have elected to emigrate there because they feel like Europeans and want to stay in Europe rather than resettle in the Middle East, Runge said.

They were first invited in 1990 by the post-Communist East German government as a belated act of contrition for the Holocaust before its reunification with the West that year.

Though anti-immigrant sentiment has been on the rise in Germany at a time of high unemployment, German.
political leaders have welcomed the influx of Jews as the country tries to distance itself from its Nazi crimes.

"Germany is seen as a stable country and is much closer to the region, way of life and climate where they are coming from in the former Soviet Union," Runge said.

Others see a better economic future in Germany than Israel, some are following relatives who are already in Germany and some come because it is easier to take non-Jewish spouses and family members to Germany than to Israel.

Although many of the Jewish immigrants have university degrees and other high qualifications, few spoke any German and even after acquiring language skills have found it hard to find jobs in their professions.

Igor Chalmiev, a construction engineer from Azerbaijan, admits he was at first reluctant to go to Germany. "I knew I wanted to get away from Azerbaijan and it was a choice between Israel and Germany," he said. "Naturally I had fears about Germany because of the history but my brother had gone to Germany a year earlier and said it was a good place."

Chalmiev, 44, who has had more than 100 job interviews with construction firms but no offers in the last seven years, said he has no regrets about picking Germany and is confident that once his German improves he will find work as an engineer.

"The quality of life in Germany is very good," said Chalmiev, who works as a volunteer at the Jewish Culture Center in Berlin. "Many of the emigrants from the former Soviet states picked Germany because they wanted to stay in Europe and Germany was the only place they could go."

**New Wave of Jewish Immigration Causes Tensions**

Charlotte Knobloch, head of the Jewish community in Munich, said the flood of Eastern European Jews has strained resources and created friction with German Jews and other Germans.

"A lot of the smaller Jewish communities have been overwhelmed by the influx," she said. "It's going to be the biggest challenge for us in the years ahead. But we can't master this ourselves. We need the government's support."

Runge said German Jews sometimes complain about the secular immigrants. They want to learn German, she said, while the German Jewish community often wants to teach them Hebrew.

"There are tensions and cultural clashes between German Jews and the newcomers. The immigrants who come to Germany often have worldly interests," Runge said. "Those who are religious go to Israel. German Jews are not as liberal as the immigrants."

Despite the friction, many Jews and non-Jews say they are delighted that Jewish life is again thriving in Germany.

"It's fantastic," said Alice Brauner-Orthen, 32, a Berlin journalist. "The immigrants have enriched and invigorated the community. Sure, there are some integration difficulties. But the bottom line is that Jewish culture is flourishing here again after Hitler tried to exterminate Jewish life."

JTA

New leader of European Jewry makes up with World Jewish Congress
PARIS, Jan. 11 (JTA) - The newly elected leader of European Jewry has mended fences with the New York-based World Jewish Congress.

At issue was how French Jewish leader Henri Hajdenberg - who was elected Sunday in Brussels to serve as president of the European Jewish Congress - regards European Jewry's place when it comes to Holocaust-era restitution issues.

The EJC, which is the European branch of the WJC, serves as the diplomatic representative in discussions involving some 2 million European Jews and their respective governments.

In the campaign platform Hajdenberg set out in Brussels before the vote, he pledged, once at the helm of the EJC, "to give more responsibility to the Jewish communities of Europe for restitution issues and on how to divide various European funds" - a function that until now has largely been handled by the WJC and the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

As president of CRIF, France's umbrella group for Jewish organizations, Hajdenberg has frequently been at odds with WJC officials over restitution issues.

During the past year, a French government-appointed commission has been probing the extent of Holocaust-era looting of Jewish assets with an eye to restitution.

Hajdenberg has emphasized the importance of French institutions acknowledging moral responsibility, rather than financial compensation, for Jews who suffered persecution under the nation's World War II pro-Nazi Vichy government.

The WJC has focused on the monetary component, arguing that those responsible for the wartime theft of Jewish assets should repay what was stolen.

As a result of their differences, Hajdenberg's determination to keep the question of monetary reparations out of negotiations with the French government, banks and insurance companies led to often acrimonious exchanges with WJC officials over who should handle restitution issues for Holocaust victims in France.

In New York, WJC's executive director, Elan Steinberg, said the acrimony was now a thing of the past.

He said there were indeed strong differences of opinion six months ago, but now they have been resolved.

At that time, Steinberg said, the EJC became a part of the WJRO, the body that deals with restitution issues on behalf of the Jewish world.

At the same time, as part of an apparent compromise that defused the prevailing tensions, the WJRO was assured a role in the allocation process involving French institutions.

With Hajdenberg's election this week, all parties appear eager to let bygones be bygones.

"I look forward to working with my good friend Henri," said Steinberg.

Hajdenberg, who wrote a letter to the WJC just prior to his election expressing confidence that "we will work in the future in close cooperation," said in a phone interview, "There is no more conflict."

Running unopposed Sunday, Hajdenberg, 52, replaces German Jewish leader Ignatz Bubis, who died last August.

As part of his pre-election platform, Hajdenberg also promised to create a pan-European Holocaust educational
program, encourage the continuing renaissance of Eastern European Jewry and create closer ties between European Jews and the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa.

Hajdenberg, who became CRIF president in 1995 and is now serving his second term, has become personally involved in Middle East peace efforts, including a visit to the region last year when he met several Arab leaders.

(JTA Foreign Editor Mitchell Danow contributed to this report.)

Anchorage Daily News

Australian police review case against accused Nazi squad leader

SYDNEY, Australia (January 11, 2000 8:31 a.m. EST - Federal police are considering new evidence against Australian war crimes suspect Konrad Kalejs, authorities said Tuesday.

Kalejs, 86, a Latvian-born Australian citizen, went into hiding after returning to Australia last Friday. He had been living in Britain but left to avoid deportation.

Australian, U.S. and Latvian officials investigated accusations against Kalejs in the early 1990s, but no charges were brought because the evidence collected was not strong enough.

Australian Federal Police spokesman Steve Jiggins said the case had never been closed, and agents are now reviewing the file and examining recently published information.

"New information appears to have surfaced over recent days and we will obviously look at that information," Jiggins said.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, which searches the world for suspected former Nazis, has said Kalejs served in the notorious Arajs Kommando, a Nazi killing squad responsible for the death of 30,000 people, mostly Jews, in Latvia during World War II. He has denied the allegations.

Newspapers in London and Sydney have published a photograph allegedly showing Kalejs wearing the uniform of the Nazi SS auxiliary in 1942, and excerpts from a Nazi propaganda newsletter dated June 5, 1942, in which someone said to be Kalejs describes taking part in attacks on Soviet-held villages.

In his only interview since returning to Australia, Kalejs told the Special Broadcasting Service on Saturday that he commanded an Arajs Kommando unit. But he denied he was ever present when civilians were shot.

Kalejs said he was ordered by German officers to head the force, and did not know at the time that it was part of the Arajs Kommando.

Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said it was the first time Kalejs admitted being linked to the Arajs Kommando.

"This is the first-ever crack in his armor," Zuroff told The Australian newspaper. "Surely this would alert the Australian government to the fact they have a Nazi war criminal living among them."

The government and some observers have warned that evidence against Kalejs was flimsy, and that
rushing into a prosecution could jeopardize any future trial or deportation proceedings.

By ROHAN SULLIVAN

REUTERS

Deportation of Suspected Nazi Sought
07:16EST

By JOANN LOVIGLIO
Associated Press Writer
01/12/00

PHILADELPHIA (AP) -- The federal government hopes to revoke the U.S. citizenship of a man they say served as a Ukrainian SS guard and participated in the Nazis' slaughter of thousands of Jews in Poland.

The Justice Department said Fedir Kwoczak concealed his past when he entered the country, failing to reveal he was recruited from the SS-run Trawniki Training Camp in Nazi-occupied Poland to participate in Germany's "Operation Reinhard."

The campaign that led to the killing of 1.7 million Polish Jews and the enslavement of thousands of others in forced-labor camps.

When Kwoczak applied for a visa seeking entry to the United States in 1949, he told immigration authorities he was a laborer in Poland and Germany during World War II.

In a nonjury trial that started Monday and is expected to last two weeks, the Justice Department has asked U.S. District Judge Louis H. Pollak to strip the 78-year-old retired masonry worker's citizenship and ultimately have him deported.

Kwoczak's attorney, John Rogers Carroll, maintains that German wartime personnel rosters from the 1940s are inaccurate and do not link Kwoczak to any particular crime. Kwoczak claims he is not the Fedir Kwoczak identified in the documents, saying his military career ended before the war because of poor eyesight and an injured hand.

The complaint is part of the Justice Department's ongoing efforts to find and take legal action against former Nazi soldiers now living in the United States. About 63 alleged Nazi persecutors have been stripped of U.S. citizenship and 52 have been deported since the Office of Special Investigations started its operation in 1979.

In addition, about 150 suspected Nazis or collaborators have been blocked from immigrating to the United States because their names appeared on the Justice Department's "watch list."

The Independant

Alleged Nazi living in Britain faces Lithuanian investigation

By Severin Carrell

12 January 2000

Detectives in Lithuania reopened an investigation into alleged war crimes by Anton Gecas, who lives in Britain.

The Special Investigations Unit in the Lithuanian general prosecutors office said it was reviewing archives about the activities of Mr Gecas's unit. Mr Gecas, who lives in Edinburgh, has always vigorously denied allegations that he was directly involved in the murder of Jews by police auxiliaries.

He lost a libel action against Scottish Television in the 1990s after the first trip by a British court abroad, to allow the judge to hear evidence from aged witnesses in Lithuania.
Mr Gecas has not been prosecuted in Britain but faces action if the Lithuanians unearth fresh evidence. Rimvydas Valentukevichius, head of the Special Investigations Unit, said it had not uncovered evidence directly implicating Mr Gecas but the material was still being studied.

He said Mr Gecas was in a police battalion which was reputedly engaged in repression but that enough evidence had not been discovered to bring a case. Mr Valentukevichius said: "So far we haven't found it [evidence against Mr Gecas] but I can't say it won't be found in the future ... If it is found then we will start a case."

Ninety per cent of Lithuania's pre-war Jewish community of 220,000 died in the Holocaust, including 55,000 of the 60,000 Jews in Vilnius.
USHMM Chairman plans resignation

Austrian museum may have looted art

Jewish Organisations Reject Companies' Offer on Holocaust Era Insurance Policies in Germany

Nazi gas killings impossible: Irving

JTA
1/13/00

The chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council informed President Clinton that he intends to resign as soon as a successor is appointed. After more than two decades of involvement in creation and development of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Miles Lerman told Clinton, "I am proud that I have accomplished all of my original goals."

Wednesday January 12 12:30 PM ET

Austrian Museum May Have Looted Art

By GEORGE JAHN Associated Press Writer

VIENNA, Austria (AP) - A year of research at an Austrian museum has turned up about 70 artworks believed to have been looted by Nazis from their Jewish owners, a museum official said Wednesday.

Gottfried Biedermann, who heads the Joanneum Museum's commission looking into Nazi art looting, said the works include paintings and drawings by Auguste Rodin, Gustav Klimt and lesser-known artists. He said the pieces are worth a total of $400,000 to $800,000.

In compliance with a 1998 law calling for restitution to Jews for artwork looted by the Nazis, the Joanneum and other museums are examining the origins of their works. The Joanneum, located in Austria's second-largest city of Graz, has drawn up a 400-page report on the issue.

Biedermann said owners or heirs have been established for about half the artworks. Photos of the others will be posted on the Internet if no owners can be found, he said.

Thousands of art objects were confiscated from Jewish families in Austria, which was part of Nazi Germany before it regained its independence after World War II. Many have been on display at sites like the Belvedere palace, the Vienna Museum of Art and regional museums like the Joanneum.

Hundreds of pieces already have been returned to their rightful owners. Last year, 250 works of art worth millions of dollars were returned to the Rothschild family.
Still, some demands are not being met.

Austria is being sued over its refusal to return five paintings by Klimt valued at $160 million and hanging in the state-run Belvedere. Lawyers for the heirs of Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer say the works should be returned to the late industrialist’s family. Bloch-Bauer fled Austria in 1938 amid the Nazi takeover, leaving most of his art collection behind.

The Austrian government, though, says the works do not fall under the 1998 restitution law. The paintings were given to the museum by Bloch-Bauer’s wife’s before the Nazis seized power in 1939, government officials say.

Thursday, Jan 13, 2000

Jewish Organisations Reject Companies’ Offer on Holocaust Era Insurance Policies in Germany

By Itamar Levin

Five leading European insurance companies last night offered to pay 100 million German marks to cover all claims relating to policies issued in Germany to Holocaust victims. Representatives of Israel and the Jewish organisations rejected the offer out of hand.

The companies were Allianz, of Germany, Generali of Italy, Winterthur and Zurich Life of Switzerland, and AXA of France. These companies are members of the international committee for examining the Holocaust victims’ insurance policy problem, headed by former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

At the committee’s meeting yesterday in Washington, Israeli and major Jewish organisation representatives demanded that the companies commit to make payment in a maximum volume of DM 900 million ($450 million), as follows:

- DM 300 million out of funds of the forced labourers settlement (totalling altogether DM 10 billion), for humanitarian aid to needy Holocaust survivors, as against insurance policies, eligibility for benefits respecting which can no longer be proven.

- DM 100 million out of the funds of the forced labourers’ settlements to finance claims by the heirs of the insured. Unutilised funds under this item likewise to be transferred to humanitarian aid.

- DM 500 million to cover claims by heirs of the insured, to be allocated by the companies out of their assets. Unutilised funds under this item to be returned to the companies.

It was also proposed that a similar structure be determined in respect of all countries concerned, but that the amounts would be modified in accordance with the estimated volume of Holocaust victims’ policies in each country.

As far as is known, the survivors’ organisations oppose this offer, and are demanding that the companies make a commitment in unlimited amount to cover claims by the heirs of the insured. The survivors’ organisations constitute one third of the Jewish representatives, along with the representative organisations (the claims conference, the organisation for the restitution of Jewish property, etc.) and the Israeli government.

After several hours of consultations, the companies’ representatives rejected the proposal, and proposed establishing an overall amount of only DM 100 million for covering claims relating to policies issued in Germany. The Jewish representatives, as stated, rejected this offer out of hand, and the negotiations will resume in London in two weeks time.

Published by Israel’s Business Arena January 13, 2000

The Australian

Nazi gas killings impossible: Irving

By MICHAEL HORSNELL in London

14jan00