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APPELLATE COURT UNANIMOUSLY AFFIRMS DENATURALIZATION OF  
PARTICIPANT IN NAZI MASSACRE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A federal appellate court has agreed with a lower court decision revoking the citizenship of an Illinois man who helped massacre Jews during World War II, the Justice Department announced today. The man, who served as a guard at a Nazi slave labor camp in Nazi-occupied Poland, unlawfully concealed his activities from U.S. officials when he applied to immigrate to the U.S. after the war.

The unanimous decision by a three-judge panel of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, issued on Friday, affirmed a U.S. District Court decision last April stripping citizenship from Bronislaw Hajda, 73, a retired factory worker living in Schiller Park, Illinois. Hajda immigrated to the U.S. in 1950.

In the affirmed lower court decision, Judge David H. Coar ruled that Hajda served in Nazi-occupied Poland as an armed guard at the SS Training Camp Trawniki and the Treblinka Labor Camp. The court said he participated in a July 1944, massacre of Jewish prisoners at Treblinka and later served in the SS Streibel Battalion, making him ineligible to enter the U.S. and ineligible for citizenship.

"This decision confirms that we can still secure a measure of justice in these tragic cases, despite the passage of so many years," said Eli M. Rosenbaum, Director of the Office of Special Investigations.

Rosenbaum said the proceedings to denaturalize Hajda were a result of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution residing in this country.

Hajda is one of 60 Nazi persecutor stripped of U.S. citizenship since the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) was created in 1979. To date, 48 such individuals have been removed from the United States. Some 300 persons are currently under investigation by OSI, according to Rosenbaum.

The trial court, whose decision was affirmed Friday, had found that on January 9, 1943, Hajda entered the Trawniki

Training Camp, where Nazis trained concentration camp guards, including "practice" guarding Jewish prisoners at a nearby labor camp. On March 2, 1943, Hajda was transferred to the notorious Treblinka Labor Camp, where inmates were subjected to grueling labor, inadequate food and medical care and routine brutality.

The trial court also determined that on or about July 22, 1944, guards at Treblinka massacred the remaining 300-700 Jewish prisoners in the face of the advancing Red Army, and that all of the guards on duty that day--including Hajda--participated in the massacre.

After the massacre, the trial court said, Hajda served in the SS Streibel Battalion, recruiting and guarding forced Polish laborers building fortifications against the Russian advance.

In the Friday decision, the appellate court affirmed the trial court's ruling that the government's documentary evidence was "overwhelming." The evidence included seven captured German wartime rosters documenting Hajda's service at the Trawniki Labor Camp, the Treblinka Labor Camp and in the SS Streibel Battalion; statements of admitted Treblinka camp guards who named Hajda as a fellow camp guard; and statements of Hajda's father and sister to Polish authorities, in connection with their own prosecution for collaboration with the Germans, acknowledging that Hajda had served with the SS, the notorious Nazi security force.

The case was prosecuted by the Criminal Division's OSI, with the assistance of the U.S. Attorney's office in Chicago. The trial was held last March in Chicago.

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