



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT MOVES TO REVOKE U.S. CITIZENSHIP OF FORMER GESTAPO INTERROGATOR WHO PARTICIPATED IN MASS MURDER

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Justice initiated proceedings today to revoke the U.S. citizenship of a Panama City, Florida, man based on his participation in the persecution and mass murder of Jews and other civilians during 1942 and 1943.

The complaint, filed today in U.S. District Court in Pensacola, alleges that Michael Gorshkow, 79, participated in Nazi crimes in Belarus while serving in the Gestapo, the Nazis' Secret State Police.

According to the complaint, Gorshkow was a Gestapo interpreter/interrogator at the headquarters of the German security police in Minsk and participated in a Nazi mass murder at the Jewish ghetto in Slutsk in February 1943. Some 3,000 Jewish men, women, and children were shot to death at pits or burned alive when Nazi-led forces set fire to the ghetto and blocked the Jews from leaving.

Michael Chertoff, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division said, "The Gestapo was one of the most feared instruments of Nazi brutality and murder, and no one who participated in the Gestapo's reign of terror deserves the privilege of U.S. citizenship."

Office of Special Investigations Director Eli M. Rosenbaum added, "The liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Slutsk is a particularly ghastly example of the mass murders carried out by Nazi forces in the name of 'racial purity.'"

The Nazis' advance written order for the mass murder referred to the operation as a 'resettlement' of the ghetto's inhabitants, but the 'resettlement territory' specified in the order consisted of two killing pits near Slutsk, where Jewish men, women, and children were shot.

According to the complaint, the Gestapo and other elements of the German security police in Minsk were charged with exterminating Jewish residents and suppressing suspected Communist sympathizers. Nearly a half million Jews were killed by Nazi-controlled forces in Belarus during the German occupation.

The complaint also alleges that Gorshkow helped interrogate political prisoners in Minsk and participated in so-called "anti-partisan" operations involving the torture, deportation, and murder of thousands of civilians.

Gorshkow was born in Estonia and immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1951. He was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in St. Louis County, Minnesota in 1963. The complaint asserts that he was ineligible to immigrate to the United States under a statute that barred the entry of persons who assisted in persecution, and that he was also ineligible for a U.S. visa because he misrepresented his wartime activities during the immigration process.

The proceedings to denaturalize Gorshkow are a result of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution residing in this country. Since OSI began operations in 1979, 67 Nazi persecutors have been stripped of U.S. citizenship, 55 such individuals have been removed from the United States, and 165 suspected Nazi persecutors have been stopped at U.S. ports of entry and barred from entering the country. More than 170 U.S. residents are currently under active investigation by OSI.

The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation's (OSI) and the US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida worked together to initiate denaturalization proceedings.