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COURT REVOKES U.S. CITIZENSHIP OF CHICAGO MAN WHO HELPED NAZIS DESTROY L'VIV'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. District Court in Chicago has revoked the U.S. citizenship of Osyp Firishchak of Chicago, Illinois, based on his involvement in Nazi Germany's destruction of the Jewish population of L'viv in present-day Ukraine while serving during World War II in the Nazi-sponsored Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (UAP), Acting Assistant Attorney General John C. Richter of the Criminal Division announced today.

"As found by the court, Osyp Firishchak was on the front lines enforcing Hitler's brutal measures against the Jews of L'viv. Without the assistance of active collaborators like Firishchak, the Nazis could not have carried out their genocidal plans for Europe's Jews," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Richter. "This ruling serves as a continuing reminder that those who took part in Nazi crimes will find no sanctuary in this country," he added.

In a 52-page decision issued yesterday following a trial held in Chicago on Aug. 1-4, 2005, U.S. District Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan found that Firishchak served in the Nazi-created UAP from October 1941 until shortly before the German occupation forces fled L'viv in July 1944. The court ruled: "The evidence presented by the government and Firishchak's own incredible testimony shows that he was a participant in an organization that perpetrated some of the most horrific acts against human decency ever known in history." The court found that Firishchak, as a member of the UAP, took part in sweeps of the ghetto during actions to round up L'viv's Jews for deportation to Nazi camps and execution, and hunted for Jews who attempted to hide or flee.

Judge Der-Yeghiayan wrote that Firishchak "lied on the stand" and "unsuccessfully attempted to deceive the government and this Court." The court concluded: "Sometimes the wheels of justice grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine. Justice has finally caught up with Firishchak."

Firishchak, 86, immigrated to the United States from Germany in June 1949. The court found that he concealed his Nazi service when he applied for a visa by telling U.S. officials that he had worked for a Ukrainian "cooperative" in L'viv and had also lived in Slovakia during the war.

Office of Special Investigations (OSI) Director Eli M. Rosenbaum said, "Judge Der-Yeghiayan's powerful and eloquent decision may be the only memorial that most of the victims will ever have. Although their names will likely remain unknown, some measure of justice has at last been obtained on their behalf."

The proceedings to denaturalize Firishchak were instituted in 2003 by OSI and the United States Attorney's Office in Chicago. The matter was tried before Judge Der-Yeghiayan by OSI Senior Trial Attorneys Jeffrey L. Menkin and Gregory S. Gordon. The case is a result of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify, investigate and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. Since OSI began operations in 1979, it has won cases against 101 individuals who assisted in Nazi persecution. In addition, more than 170 individuals who sought to enter the United States in recent years have been blocked from doing so as a result of OSI's "Watch List" program, which is enforced in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security.

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