



CHGS Special Edition: A Nazi in our midst?

A Nazi in our midst? Pursuit of justice must persist

Article by: Alejandro Baer June 17, 2013
Star Tribune

If he is connected with war crimes, he must be held accountable.



Until Friday, 94-year-old Michael Karkoc was only an immigrant living the quiet and peaceful life of a retiree in northeast Minneapolis. He was known as a loving father and grandfather, a longtime member of the Ukrainian immigrant community, a citizen who attended church regularly, always friendly and considerate toward his neighbors.

But soon Karkoc will be subject to the full force of the law, suspected of the worst imaginable of crimes. Karkoc is alleged to have been a top commander of a Nazi SS-led unit accused of burning villages filled with women and children. It seems that the evidence is strong enough for him to face deportation and to be prosecuted for war crimes in Germany or Poland.

How could this man immigrate to the United States after the war and live a normal life in Minnesota for six decades? According to an extensive investigation by the Associated Press, Karkoc fooled the American authorities in 1949, concealing his role as an officer and founding member of the infamous Ukrainian Self Defense Legion.

To read the entire article please click [here](#).

Immigration to America: the 1948 Displaced Persons Act

By Jodi Elowitz June 17, 2013

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Jewish Displaced Persons in Neu-Freimann are told their are no immigration certificates available 1947. CHGS courtesy of Jack Sutin

The startled reaction to the news that Michael Karkoc, an alleged former Nazi is living in Northeast Minneapolis is understandable. To have a Nazi in our midst is unsettling and leads to the larger question of how it is possible for someone who (if found guilty of war crimes) could have lived in the Twin Cities for 70 years undetected.

In terms of what happens next, the United States needs to investigate Karkoc's denial of military service on the application form he filed in order to immigrate to the United States.

Karkoc was admitted into this country under the 1948 Displaced Persons Act, designed to authorize for a limited period of time the admission into the United States of certain European displaced persons for permanent residence and or other purposes.

After World War II there were more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons between 1945 and 1952 living in DP camps throughout Germany and Austria, waiting to regain their lives after the Holocaust. At first the thought was to return them to their countries of origin but most had no homes or families to go back to, and antisemitism remained problematic. The Displaced Persons Act at first was not specific or favorable to the Jewish DP's and many Jews continued to wait to immigrate to the United States. It was not until 1950 that the act was amended and Jews had more accessibility to emigrate. By 1952 80,000 displaced Jews made it to the US with the additional aid of Jewish relief agencies. Of those 80,000 it is believed that roughly three to four hundred made Minnesota their new home.

Life in Minnesota was not easy for the new Jewish immigrants, jobs were hard to come by and the larger community did not quite understand what these refugees had experienced during the war. Most did not speak of their Holocaust experiences until much later, when people began to ask and wanted to hear about what they witnessed.

When the news of Karkoc's alleged Nazi past appeared on every Minnesota news and media outlet, local Holocaust survivors began to speak up, hoping that if he did indeed commit these crimes against his fellow Ukrainians and Poles, murdering women and children, that he would be brought to justice. Many wondered how he was able to slip into this country under the act that was designed to help people who had been victims of Nazi persecution and could not return home. As one survivor said, "The fact that he was let into the US and has lived a relatively quiet and happy life is problematic because justice has not been served."

Sources for this article: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia, University of Washington Bothel Library.

[The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization](#)

[The Holocaust by Bullets](#)

[Ordinary Men](#)

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