

Will justice finally be done?

Britain's first war crimes trial came to an abrupt end in January when an Old Bailey jury found Szymon Serafinowicz medically unfit to stand trial. Ten years after the launch of a public campaign to bring war criminals hiding in Britain to justice, *Searchlight* examines the background to this case and the failure of Britain to prosecute those guilty of some of the worst crimes against humanity.

Many of the suspected war criminals living in Nazi police battalions from the Baltic states, Ukraine and Belorussia. As the Germans advanced into eastern Europe many anti-communists saw them as liberators and eagerly enlisted to help the Nazi SS mobile Einsatz units murdering entire Jewish communities. The Nazis relied heavily on local volunteers to help carry out their programme of mass slaughter and very quickly Latvians and Lithuanians became notorious for their brutality in helping the Nazis to try to create a "Judenrein" (Jew free) world.

Searchlight was at the forefront of the campaign to bring Nazi war criminals and their accomplices to justice since its launch in 1986. The campaign faced opposition from many politicians, the media and some religious representatives and took nearly five years to succeed, with the passing of the War Crimes Act in May 1991.

Since the end of the Second World War a number of anti-fascist journalists and Members of Parliament have brought to public attention Britain's role in sheltering war

criminals. One well known early example is the case of Dr Dering, who performed barbaric "operations" on inmates in Auschwitz. Dering, whose extradition to face trial was requested by Polish authorities as early as 1946, went on to be awarded an OBE for his service in what was then Somaliland, and then returned to Britain to work in a general practice in Finsbury Park, north London.

From the outset the Home Office had decided not to cooperate with extraditing Dr Dering and was intent on protecting him. One of the key witnesses to Dering's wartime activities was Dr Karl Sperber, who was imprisoned in Auschwitz. His evidence was dismissed by Special Branch as unreliable because: "Sperber is Jewish and his sympathies are towards the left ... Dering refers in his own statement, to allegations made against him by Jews."

Government never challenged this twisted logic. The Home Office reasoned that Dering would not get a fair trial in Poland and an official at the Aliens Department wrote in a memorandum: "my own feeling is that to arrange for emigration, perhaps to some South American country, may well prove to be the best solution". When the issue of war criminals hit international headlines in the late 1970s and 1980s many in Britain displayed the same reluctance to act.

Despite periodic requests from the former Soviet Union, Poland and other countries to return war criminals for trial in their native countries, successive British governments were extraordinarily reluctant to admit that they had harboured murderers. One of the main reasons why the government and criminal justice system were so reluctant to bring Nazis and their accomplices to justice was that the British security services continued to identify war criminals as potential agents and spies and return them to their homelands where they acted as agents in the Cold War.

The uncomfortable truth was that Britain had actually encouraged many thousands of east Europeans who had collaborated with the Nazi murder squads to enter Britain. Many of

Why Nazis in Britain must be brought to justice

NO MERCY

As a war crimes investigator, I was forever shocked by the ordinary people who had become evil killers. I would walk into a home, a farmhouse, a factory and find an entirely ordinary-looking person. How could I, a 19-year-old soldier, believe that this is a torturer, a man who experimented on live human beings? But it was the documents that told us so.



By GREVILLE JANNER, MP
GREVILLE JANNER QC is Labour MP for Leicester West.

He was a war crimes investigator in the British Army in the Rhine. Half of his family were massacred by the Nazis in different locations in a synagogue which was set light to.

Mr Janner, pictured as a young man in his Army uniform—is now Joint Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary War Crimes Group.



The hidden Nazis, as seen by cartoonist Rousch

They are, and the public must be told, and the Government should remove the cover and expose the wicked reality.

WHEN the war ended, thousands of Nazi murderers went into hiding. Some escaped down rat lines to South America, the USA, Canada, Australia—and some we now know, in Britain.

war in which our troops were killed and injured. Too many of his fellow soldiers and of Continental Europeans who are here in the UK should be brought to justice.

How many are there? The Simon Wiesenthal Institute has produced a list of 17 suspected war criminals from whom are now dead. Bringing in known addresses, and right still to be traced. Another list of 26 has surfaced through Scottish Television. Details will be made.

Government—the way to bring genocidal murderers to account. How can they do it? The guilty should be stripped of citizenship. The Government says that this applies only if he was a British citizen.

Greville Janner MP calls for war criminals to be brought to justice, in the Sunday Mirror in March 1987

these former murderers enlisted in the European Voluntary Worker (EVW) schemes, aimed at alleviating the vast shortages of labour that Britain and the Commonwealth countries were facing in 1946. As David Cesarani, the historian, says in his book about war criminals in Britain, *Justice Delayed* "Many warned that there were not the facilities, personnel or the time to screen the recruits [to the EVW schemes] to ensure that they had clean war records." This is in sharp contrast to the time, personnel and facilities that were found to prevent Jewish Holocaust survivors from entering Britain.

Searchlight finds war criminals

The catalyst for the public campaign to bring about justice in this country occurred in October 1986, when a delegation from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre based in Los Angeles presented the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, and Mrs Thatcher with a list of 17 suspected war criminals who they believed were living in Britain. It was during this time that Canada and Australia were bringing in legislation to enable the conviction or deportation of former war criminals.

Ten months earlier, *Searchlight* began to investigate 30 suspected Ukrainian war criminals thought to be living in Britain. *Searchlight's* investigations soon revealed one of the suspects to be Lev Marnitski, a 65-year-old Ukrainian living in Peterborough.

Marnitski had trained at the SS officers' camp at Trawniki and then joined an SS unit in Poland. Trawniki was where Nazis were taught "guarding ghettos and carrying out deportations as well as duty at the extermination centres". David Cesarani believes such an SS unit operating in Poland "would have participated in sending thousands of Jews to the gas chambers".

After the Simon Wiesenthal Centre



"The butcher of Auschwitz": Dr Dering free in London in 1964