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ON PAGE 30

THE BOSTON GLOBE
20 May 1982

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Author cuts estimate of Nazis brought to US; others say there's no way to tell

By Judy Foreman
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In a revision of an estimate reported in Wednesday's editions of The Globe, Holocaust scholar Jack Nusan Porter of Brighton said yesterday he believes a possible 1000 Nazi collaborators entered the United States on their own after World War II. Other researchers said the validity of any estimate is impossible to prove.

In Wednesday's editions of The Globe, Porter estimated the figure was 3000.

Porter, a sociology teacher at Hebrew College in Brookline and the author of a two-volume work on the Jewish resistance, said his estimate of 3000 was based partially on lumping together the estimated 1000 Nazi collaborators with 1558 known German and Austrian scientists brought to this country after the war by the US government under "Project Paperclip."

Porter said yesterday that his revised estimate of 1000 is based on research done by Charles R. Allen, author of several books and booklets on Nazi war criminals, including "Nazi War Criminals Among Us" in 1963.

Allen said yesterday in a telephone interview that "it may be reasonable to assume as many as 1000 collaborators may have come in from all parts of Europe ... but this is just a guesstimate and no one should go around shouting that 1000 came in."

And Allan Ryan, director of the Office of Special Investigations at the US Justice Department added: "I don't

think anybody does know. They [collaborators] mainly concealed what they had done before - and 400,000 people came in as displaced persons between 1948 and 1952."

Researcher Allen said estimating numbers of alleged Nazi collaborators and war criminals is difficult, noting that Vienna-based Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal believes 3000 Nazi war criminals wound up in the United States, a figure Allen says is "grossly exaggerated. There is no solid factual base data. Even outfits like '60 Minutes' had many things wrong," he said, referring to the CBS-TV program, which reported Sunday that 300 Byelorussian collaborators had been smuggled into this country by US intelligence agencies.

That officially sponsored brain-drain, Allen explained yesterday, began in 1944 (when it was called "Project Overcast") with the stated purpose from the Joint Chiefs Intelligence Board to "seek out, seize and secure and then exploit" German and Austrian scientists, technologists, technicians and intelligence resources for use by US government and related private agencies, including corporations.

"In 1979," said Allen, "under the Freedom of Information Act, I learned from the FBI that there were 1558 German and Austrian scientists who came in under 'Project Paperclip.' But this does not mean we imported 1558 Nazi war criminals - it's just not so."

According to Allen, who recalled yesterday that he testified on this subject as an invited expert witness on July 19, 1978, at a congressional committee, most of the individuals who came to this country under "Project Paperclip" had been minimal members of the Nazi party, though "some of them, but by no means all, were found to have participated in the processes of the Holocaust."

"There were 1558 of them," said Allen, "but they were not all Nazi war criminals, nor were they all collaborators, though a significant number were."

Allen said about 10 of these people have been proved to be Nazi war criminals. The line between a war criminal and a Nazi collaborator, Allen said, is often blurred because there were various degrees of collaboration.

His own research shows, Allen added, "that I can prove that at a minimum 286 Nazi war criminals entered the US after the Second World War," of whom he says "I could name each one, when he was born, when he died, any personal data."

Of these, 149 had been utilized as recently as the 1960s by more than 12 government agencies, including the FBI, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the US Air Force, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, Allen recalled testifying.

About 30 percent of these 286 war criminals, Allen added, are now dead.