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# Did the CIA Scuttle Efforts To Extradite Nazi Suspect?

By Ralph Blumenthal

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NEW YORK — A California man who has been under investigation by federal immigration officials for alleged Nazi war crimes says that he was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency for anti-Soviet spy work and that the agency had discussed his case with the authorities of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The investigation was subsequently dropped, the intelligence agency reported back to the suspect, Edgars Laipenieks, of San Diego, a former intelligence officer with the pro-Nazi Latvian police during World War II.

The unusual case appears to document a continuing link between U.S. intelligence agencies and at least one of the World War II war crimes suspects who have been under investigation here for allegedly concealing their past to gain entry into the United States.

Another of the recent suspects, a high-ranking Nazi scientist, was apparently brought to this country after the war by U.S. intelligence, and there have been indications of similar contacts in other cases.

**AMID AN UPSURGE** of interest in the long-unresolved war crimes cases, the immigration service announced Wednesday that it had filed deportation proceedings against three resident aliens who had allegedly concealed their participation in atrocities.

Laipenieks, a 63-year-old former Olympics sports coach, who came to the United States in 1960, was on a list of 37 war crimes suspects under investigation by the immigration authorities in 1974.

Witnesses have contended that he participated in killings in the central prison in Riga in 1941, and Israeli officials are known to have given more detailed allegations to immigration investigators last month.

Laipenieks's contacts with the CIA came to light Wednesday during an interview with two reporters from the San Diego Evening Tribune, Bob Dorn and Martin Gerchen.

The reporters said that Laipenieks insisted he was no longer under investigation and displayed a letter to him dated July 20, 1976 from the CIA to support his contention.

**THE LETTER**, which Laipenieks also provided to The New York Times, reads in full:

"Please excuse the exceedingly long delay in responding to your last correspondence. During the interim we have been corresponding with the Immigration and Naturalization Service about your status. We have now been told that you are not amenable to deportation under existing laws. It is our understanding that INS has advised their San Diego office to cease any action against you.

"If such does not prove the case, please let us know immediately. Thank you once again for your cooperation in this instance."

Edgars Laipenieks, an alien Latvian living in the San Diego area, walks near his home after telling reporters that he is the man accused by Israeli investigators of involvement in World War II killings of Jews.

that the agency had communicated with the service about the case but insisted there was no intervention. He described Laipenieks as a man who "rendered some assistance to the agency in the past." He said he did not have the details. The official added that he did not know if the agency had been aware of the allegations against Laipenieks when it accepted his assistance.

**AN IMMIGRATION SPOKESMAN** also said there had been no CIA intervention. He said the case was dropped because under existing law, war criminals were not excludable from the United States in 1960.

In a telephone interview with the Times, Laipenieks said his relationship with the CIA began in 1960 when agents approached him at the Rome Olympics where he was coaching.

He had been coaching, he said, ever since the French army discovered him teaching mountain skiing in Austria after the war and brought him back to France to teach them. In 1948, he said, he went to Chile to teach skiing and

ing," he said, in strongly accented but fluid English.

Until 1968, he said, he traveled to various places in the world with expenses paid by the CIA but no salary to seek and plan certain information about the Soviet Union. He did not elaborate.

"Before 1964 there were no satellites. We needed information on certain sites, certain locations in the USSR," he said.

**LAIPENIEKS ALSO** maintained he had no role in the killings of civilians during the war. He described himself as a plain clothes police officer who was hunting for saboteurs between 1941 and 1943, when he said, the war allowed for anti-fighting and return to running the family bakery.

The CIA "knows what I did," he said. "They know everything about me."

Connections between American intelligence and war crimes suspects also have emerged in the case of Dr. Hubertus Strugold, former director of the Medical Research Institute for

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