

1. ARAJS is a Latvian and will be about 40 years of age now. He studied "Jurisprudence" at the University at RIGA until 1938 or 1939; he had the reputation of being a brilliant student. He speaks Latvian, Russian and German very fluently, and probably a little of other languages. Upon leaving the University, he joined the Latvian Police in a junior administrative position. His reputation inside the Police Service was that of an energetic and promising young man, who was extremely anti-Russian and anti-communist. When the Germans occupied Latvia, he at once joined the German Security Police (Sicherheitsdienst) and quickly attained the rank of Major, with command of a special task-force some 150/200 strong, which operated against the partisan bands resisting in the forests. This task-force was several times ordered over the Latvian border into Russia, and whilst its duties on these occasions were ostensibly the combatting of partisan resistance, it was generally understood that it took part in pogroms ordered by the Germans against Russian Jews. He was seen in uniform in LIEPAU, Latvia, in October/November, 1944.

2. When the Germans retreated from Latvia, ARAJS came to Germany with them, accompanied by a small portion of his task-force. The majority of his men stayed behind to fight with partisans against the Russians. His wife also came to Germany and lived in the southern part of Bavaria. The person most likely to be able to give information as to his wartime activities is probably Herbert TELDMANUS, who was also a Major in the German Security Police and who is now in a DF Camp in either Niedersachsen or Westphalia. When the war ended, ARAJS adopted the name ABOLS (a common Latvian name) in order to conceal his true identity, and appeared in LUEBECK in 1945 under the latter name.

3. In late 1945 or early 1946, he was arrested in the name of ABOLS by the British and interned in a Camp near HAMBURG until late in 1948. After an investigation by the British War Crimes Commission, he was released about Christmas, 1948.

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DATE 2003 2006

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VOLDENORS ARAS

HOLDINGS BLANKENFELDS

Subject's birth: 23 October, 1918 in Tuckums, Latvia.

Citizenship: Latvian citizen

Profession: Mate, policeman, and student

Address in Latvia: Bleskowerstrasse 52 Apartment 17, Riga

Address in Sweden: Pastellvägen 38, 1st floor, S Ström, Stockholm

Passport: Subject has Provisoriskt Främlingspass No. 16A, dated 18.7.44 and valid until 11.10.44. Issued by Statens Utlännings Komisjon. Permit to stay in Stockholm from 20 August until 20 September, 1944.

Church: Baptized in Tuckums and confirmed in Riga. Belongs to the Evangelist-Luthern Church.

Wife: Zenta Zinaida, maiden name - KROHNBERGS. Born in Windau on 1.8.22. Address: Bleskowerstrasse 52, Apartment 17, Riga.

Child: Gunnars, born 8.7.41 in Windau.

Father: Ernest BLANKENFELDS, 48 years of age, hair dresser. Lives at Bleskowerstrasse 52, Apartment 17, Riga.

Mother: Anna BLANKENFELDS, 48 years old, hair dresser. Same address.

His parents have a hair dressing salon at Pferdestrasse 5, Riga.

Brothers:

(1) Mikelis BLANKENFELDS, 24 years old. Employed by an insurance company. Was deported to Siberia by the Russians in 1941 during the Russian occupation.

(2) Igors BLANKENFELDS, 22 years old, hair dresser. Is living with his parents.

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Neither Subject nor any of his family have been members of any political organization. His brother, Igors, has taken part in the war on the Eastern Front since April 1942 as a so-called "volunteer". In fact, however, the Germans mobilized the Latvian youth for war service (see later).

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Then they had to undress, the women as well as the men, put their clothes into the chests and then descend into the graves which had been dug previously. (About ten meters long, 5 meters broad, and 4 to 5 meters deep). There were steps into the graves. Women who broke down were dragged to the graves by the hair and thrown down. Some tried to escape but they were killed at once either with the end of the gun or by shots.

Machine guns were then placed around the graves and they opened fire upon the Jews. Group followed group in this manner (with regard to the children, Subject has heard that they were killed by poison). Those who fired the guns were both Germans and Latvian policemen from the ordinary police. Some Latvians from the harbor police also took part in the shooting from time to time because they got schnaps liquor (schnaps) from the Germans and because it made it possible for them to steal the jewelry and valuables from the Jews' possessions despite the fact that the Germans had forbidden it. Subject does not remember the names of those from the Latvian police who took part in the murdering. At this time, the Arajs Command was not organized and, therefore, it did not take part in this early slaughter. The Jews who were shot during this time were only those who could not be used for important German war work. The Ghetto in Riga was watched by one German and one Latvian guard. The Latvian guard was voluntary. (Subject does not know the names of the leaders or of the others who carried on the guard duties service in the Ghetto. He has never had any connection with the Ghetto and the only thing he knows about the circumstances there is that the Jews only got half a ration of food and other goods.)

The slaughter in November, 1941, lasted only for three nights, then it ceased until December at which time, probably 12 to 15,000 Jews were again murdered. In this way it continued with shorter or longer pauses during the time Subject lived in Riga. A number of Jews in the Ghetto succeeded in escaping, especially Jews who had money. The Subject, personally helped a Jew he knew before the war who had been very helpful to him during his studying and schooling time in Riga when Subject had had little money. BLANKENFELDS saw to it that this Jew, his sister, and a friend of theirs got false papers. He does not know, however, whether or not they left Latvia. The names of these Jews were

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Izaka MORDEENBURGERS, Liza MORDEENBURGERS, and Heinz HACKELS. Before the Ghetto was established, the former two lived first at Rigasche Strand IV, Linie 8, and later at Vilandesstrasse 18-8.

Early in 1942, Arajs appeared with his so-called "Kommando". About ARAJS, Subject only knows that he was a corporal in the former Latvian Army and about 28-30 years old. He does not know how big ARAJS' command was but he is sure that it wasn't more than a thousand men. He does not know the names of any of the leaders or other members of ARAJS' command because Subject was arrested by the Germans already on the first of June, 1941, and, therefore, could not see the Command in its full bloom. The organization consisted principally of Riga gutter-snipes. During this first period, the former Latvian Army uniforms with an armband with a skull on it and the inscription SIPO, were used. Later they wore German SD uniforms and were equipped with pistols. They regularly took part in all the shootings of the Jews and were paid by the Germans.

About the German SIPO in Riga, Subject can give no information of interest. He only knows that the leader was Sturmbannführer LAHGE. In addition, he knew three names from SS and Polizeigericht Riga -- namely, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ underschleusen-leitender Sturmbannführer HIRTZE, Gerichtsprokurator (?) Sturmbannführer REIPERTS and Gerichtsprokurator Leutnant LEONOR.

During the Russian occupation of Latvia, patriotic Latvians had gatherings during the nights of clean social art. They sang the Latvian national hymn, discussed the terrors of the occupying powers and Latvia's possibilities for becoming once again free. The meetings were held secretly and the members of the groups were arrested and deported or shot by the Russians when they were discovered.

Afterwards, as the Germans' terror against the Latvian people increased, it was more and more clear to the people that the German "liberation" was merely a farce and that the circumstances were as horrible as during the German occupation. Therefore, the patriot groups came to life once again and were the object of a sharp persecution from the Germans. Now the patriots' hopes for liberation were with the Americans and British. The entire organization was named "Tautas Bals" (People's Voice) and during the last paid period before Subject was arrested, the Tautas Bals prepared sabotage against German troop transports and

tactics).

During this first period, the Germans only pursued those persons in Latvia who had worked with the Russians. A great many young Latvian boys enlisted for war service on the German side voluntarily. After this 3-month period, there was a gradual decreasing of the amount of food and goods because the Germans took more and more for their own use. A very strict rationing of good and food was instituted. The German put their own people in all leading positions within Latvian commercial & industrial life and in the official administration of the country. After some months (Subject does not remember, exactly which) there was set up, for example, a German Reichskommissar, a Generalkommissar and a Gebietskommissare. Edicts were given and prohibitions of different kinds. The arrests increased afterwards and a great number of Latvians were arrested apparently without reason. At the beginning of March, 1942, the Germans arranged ordinary mobilization of boys born between 1920 and 1924. The mobilization was published in all Latvian newspapers and failure to comply would, according to the publishing, be very severe punishment. When the boys met for registering, they had to sign a paper ~~that~~ stating that they enlisted voluntarily. In this way, Subject's brother happened to join the Germans in the war.

The Jewish persecutions increased and reach, as far as Subject knows, their first climax in November-December, 1941, when thousands of Jews were arrested and put into concentration camps and shot in the woods at Salaspils and Bikernieku, 18 kilometers west and about 18 kilometers east of Riga respectively. At this time the Ghetto was established. Subject, himself, was witness to the execution of 6-7,000 Jews at Salaspils late in November, 1941. Subject then went out to the execution place in his own car to see how it was carried on (At this time, Subject was employed at the Latvian Harbor Police). The Jews came marching in long columns and Subject did not see any that were younger than 10 years among them. He saw a number of pregnant women in the columns. Those who were not able to follow the column because of sickness or old age ~~were~~ were shot on the road. About 500 meters from the execution spot, the commanding halt was given and the Jews were led further in groups of 30 to 50. At the execution spot, several chests were placed for shoes, underclothing, and other clothes, for jewelry and valuables.

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Tel: 34 10 06  
Ext. 137

16 Hamburg Intelligence Staff,  
Commissioner's Office,  
B.A.O. 14. 3.

Ref: RISH/10/26

14th February, 1950.

U.S. Emigration Commission,  
Attn. Mr. HARTMAN,  
U.S. Consulate,  
WITTOFF Camp.

SUBJECT: ARAJA @ ABOLS, fnu

1. Attached please find a report on subject sent to this office from No. 15 Schleswig-Holstein Intelligence Staff.
2. Source was a member of the FIGA Kripo until 1944, when he fled to Germany.
3. We would advise you to communicate direct with Intelligence Division, HERMOPD, should you desire to follow up the lead in Para. 3 of the attached report. The camp was almost certainly NEUNHANG and its records, together with those of similar camps for war-criminals, are now deposited in HERMOPD.

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For Regional Intelligence Officer

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MAR 1 1955

Doc. # 1 File # 1686

WILIS Roberts

was born on May 17, 1900 in Liepaja as a son of Janis CUKURS, an artisan; his mother's name is Anna nee SKULPA. Roberts Cukurs is married, his wife's name is Mildred nee BARNUM; he has two children (the age and number not certain). He participated in the Liberation Wars of Latvia 1918/1920, commissioned due to valor; attended Aviation School (military) and served in the Latvian Air Force as officer, last rank known - captain (among Latvians known as "kapteinis Cukurs"). Worked on plane construction, known as good mechanic, drove "hot rods". Quit the Air Force in 'thirties, acquired his own plane, made famous flights in 1933/34 to Africa, to the former Latvian colony Gambia, crossed the desert of Sahara; earned his living by publishing his experiences and became famous because popularized the ancient Latvian history by visiting the former colonies; wanted to visit also Tobago (another former Latvian colony in the 17th century), but was refused permission by British. Visited also some other several European states and was a person known to every kid in Latvia. He did he manage to escape during the first Soviet occupation is not known, it might be learned from former captain of Latvian air force Jnu BLAUS who is in US (addr might be obtained from Mr. Aleksandrs UDRIS, employee of the library of Congress), and from Juris BENJAMINS at 218 Young Ave., Toronto, Ont., Canada, who associated with H.C.

During the German occupation H.C. was with the German SD, in the ill-fated BRAJS group, believed to have participated in the persecution of Jews. After the war fled to Sweden and eventually settled down in Brasil, presumably Sao Paulo. During the time when the bulk of the former Latvian Legion was in the POW Camp Zedelhem, Belgium (under British administration), the British intelligence looked for H.C. and detained a second lieutenant Jnu CUKURS; the latter was able to prove that he is not identical with H.C. by showing the picture of H.C. in the book "My flight to Gambia"; also the a/m capt. BLAUS was able to state that H.C. is in Sweden because there appeared an ad in the Latvian newspaper in Sweden, inviting a woman and two kids to join father in Sweden, and though only the christian names were mentioned in the ad, Blaus identified the woman and kids as the wife and children of H.C. (names used were the ones used by H.C. in his family, not the real names, some aliases). Due to this investigation it was indicated that H.C. was sought because of his activities under the German occupation (his superior, major BRAJS, was arrested in the a/m POW Camp where he had hidden himself under a false name ALLE). Later it became known that H.C. is in Brasil where he operates a boat-rental station at a lake; he had difficulties because the local Jewish population tried to achieve his expulsion from Brasil and even destroyed his enterprise; H.C. wrote a letter to the Latvian Veterans' Organization "Daugavas Vanagi" in Germany, ab. 1950 asking for assistance in his struggle against the Brazilian Jews, viz. he wanted a letter of recommendation showing that he has not committed any atrocities during the German occupation; such a certificate was refused. Recently there was an article in a Latvian newspaper describing Cukurs' present life in Brasil, and it seems he has overcome the opposition against him and probably is running his enterprise in same place. He can be described as a very venturesome person with a touch of adventurer and good business man with little scruples. (B)

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Folder Title: Arajs, Viktors

Document Date: 03-31-1955

Document Type: Biographic Sketches

From:

To:

Subject: Cukurs, Inde, and Didrichsons

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To: Chief, IMS/LSS

Subject: OGC Trace Request

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The item identified below has been withdrawn from this file:

Folder Title: Arajs, Viktors  
Document Date: 09-07-1988  
Document Type: Memorandum  
From: IMS/LSS  
To: Office of General Counsel

Subject: Nazi War Crimes Investigation

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Folder Title: Arajs, Viktors  
Document Date: 10-07-1988  
Document Type: Letter  
From: Paralegal Specialist  
To: Bruce Einhorn

Subject: Notes

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