

April 24, 1985

Feds seek to try widow in Florida for helping alleged Nazi

MARILYN A. MOORE and TOM DUBOCO
Miami News Reporters

Federal prosecutors are trying to bring a 67-year-old Chicago widow to Florida to stand trial for allegedly harboring a fugitive Nazi collaborator.

A preliminary hearing was scheduled today on a request by federal prosecutors to have the case of Latvian-born Austra Kalnins moved from Chicago to Tampa, where she could face up to five years in prison if convicted of aiding and abetting former Nazi SS officer Konrads Kalejs by hiding him from federal lawmen, said Thomas Scorza, an assistant U.S. attorney in Chicago.

Meanwhile, federal prosecutors are expected to ask a Tampa federal grand jury to indict Kalnins, said Kirk Brandfass, an assistant U.S. attorney in Tampa.

The objective of both legal proceedings is to force Kalnins to return to Tampa to face a charge of harboring a federal fugitive, Scorza and Brandfass said.

Kalnins is free on \$5,000 bond after surrendering last Thursday to authorities in Chicago. A warrant for her arrest had been issued last week by a U.S. magistrate in Tampa, based on an affidavit by a U.S. marshal who said that Kalnins helped Kalejs elude federal Nazi hunters for more than a year.

Kalejs, 71, faces deportation for allegedly lying

Please see KALNINS, 4A

KALNINS, from 1A

about his past to immigration authorities when he entered the United States 26 years ago. He is being held without bond at the Krome Avenue detention camp in Southwest Dade, pending a preliminary hearing May 15.

Kalejs, who was arrested Friday in Miami Beach, is accused of collaborating with the Nazis in killing thousands of Jews, gypsies and other civilians in Kalejs' native Latvia, a small Baltic nation that now is part of the Soviet Union. Authorities said Kalejs failed to tell immigration about his Nazi ties when he applied for a U.S. visa in 1958.

According to court documents, prosecutors said Kalejs "admitted" he served as a first lieutenant in an SS grenadier battalion and in an elite group called the Arajs Kommando, which was dedicated to exterminating "racially undesirable enemies" of the Third Reich. The affidavit said Kalejs also admitted he "had misrepresented and concealed these facts" when he applied for entry to the United States.

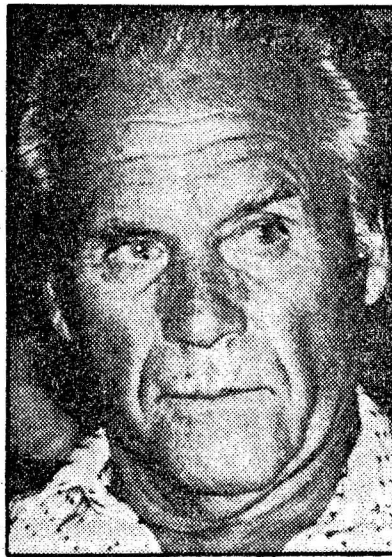
A special U.S. Justice Department unit hunting for Nazi war criminals learned of Kalejs' past in 1983. Federal authorities questioned Kalejs in March 1984 and then were unable to contact him again. After that interview, they initiated deportation proceedings against Kalejs. A warrant for his arrest was issued in February.

Kalnins and Kalejs have lived together for 25 years. In 1960, Kalejs moved into the Chicago-area home of his friend from the old country, Dr. Albert Kalnins. When Kalnins died, Kalejs continued to live with his widow, Austra, and her daughter, Dzentra, prosecutors said.

Prosecutor Scorza said Kalejs and the widow Kalnins were also business associates who lived off their real estate investments. The two jointly own an apartment building in Skokie, Ill., he said, as well as a large home in Northfield, a fashionable Chicago suburb.

According to Florida property records, the two also are joint owners of a modest home in St. Petersburg and two apartments in the oceanside Sea Ranch Club Condominium in north Broward County.

The 987-square-foot home in St. Petersburg was built in 1956 and is assessed for tax purposes at \$35,700, according to Pinellas County tax appraiser's records. It was purchased at least three years



Kalejs

ago, computerized records show.

Broward tax records show that Kalejs and Kalnins purchased in 1977 the first Sea Ranch condominium, a 1,079-square-foot apartment featuring a balcony with a southern exposure, for \$70,000. Its current value for tax purposes is \$110,390.

With Dzentra Kalnins, they purchased a second Sea Ranch condo, a 1,425-square-foot apartment in December 1979. It is assessed at \$139,720.

It was the widow Kalnins who unwittingly led investigators to Kalejs' hideaway in Miami Beach, according to sworn testimony by John Pascucci, a U.S. Marshal's Office inspector who tracked them across the country.

Kalnins, who had been placed under surveillance by federal officials, was seen April 14 making a call from a telephone booth in Chicago. Pascucci testified during Kalejs' bond hearing yesterday that the woman threw away a piece of paper as authorities moved in. On the paper was written Kalejs' phone number at the Rosemarie Manor Hotel in Miami Beach, he testified.

When Kalejs was arrested at the hotel, he had in his possession a one-way airplane ticket to Australia paid for by Kalnins, Pascucci testified. He also had \$5,000 in cash and \$3,500 in traveler's checks, the investigator said.

Jeffrey Mausner, of the government's Office of Special Investigations, said in court that the ticket and the money were indications that Kalejs intended to flee the country.

Pascucci, described as an expert at tracing and apprehending fugitives, entered the case after U.S. government officials received an anonymous tip in 1983. According to Pascucci's testimony, the secret to Kalejs' whereabouts was keeping an eye on Kalnins' movements.

Pascucci's testimony traced Kalejs in and out of the country after he left Chicago in the fall of 1984, driving a white Oldsmobile Cutlass jointly owned by him and Kalnins.

Pascucci testified that investigators later found "a life's worth of documents" in the tirewell of the Cutlass. The documents were identification papers belonging to C. Mikelson, whom Pascucci identified as Kalejs' late brother-in-law. Pascucci testified that Kalejs was preparing to assume Mikelson's identity when he was arrested.

According to testimony, Kalejs traveled to Australia from Toronto, Canada, in October 1984. He returned to Toronto in November and moved into a rooming house, where he lived for two months.

"I can't believe it," his Toronto landlord, Rudolph Velps, said in an interview. "I am sorry for that. I didn't know. That (SS commando group) is no good. He didn't talk about Latvia at all. Not a word."

Velps said Kalejs lived quietly, paying \$50 a week to rent a room in Velps' house, eating out at restaurants and spending much time at a doctor's office. "He complained about his rheumatism pains and went for treatment here," Velps said. "He said he came to Toronto for special treatment."

Velps, a Latvian émigré who said he rents rooms only to his countrymen, said he had never met Kalejs before. Velps said Kalejs left Toronto in January, saying he was going to Florida and that he might return to Velps' house later if the room was still available.

Kalejs, Kalnins and the daughter surfaced at one of their apartments in Broward in mid-February, according to Pascucci's testimony.

"They were here only for five or six days," Sea Ranch complex manager Roland Morrow said in an interview, noting that the two apartments usually are leased to tenants. "I talked to her (Austra Kalnins) about business. She was a quiet, unassuming person. Right after they left, the U.S. marshals came asking about them."

FOREIGN NEWS

U.S. steps up Nazi hunt

SIXTY U.S. marshals have descended on St Petersburg, Florida, in the last few weeks watching, following and questioning several former members of the Nazi SS who live in the quiet retirement community.

The former SS men are suspected of hiding and helping wanted Nazi war criminals sought by the U.S. Justice Department.

They are not Germans but Latvians, some of the thousands who joined SS units after the Nazis invaded their country.

The U.S. authorities say

from Jeremy Campbell
in Washington

these units, along with those from Lithuania and the Ukraine, were among the most brutal, seizing and killing hundreds of thousands of Jews for the Nazis.

In the confusion after the war they were able to escape to England, Australia, Canada and the U.S. where they are a closely-knit group calling themselves Latvian war veterans.

NBC says there are former Latvian SS men in Florida,

Chicago and in small communities all over the U.S. In some cities there are organized groups of SS members and their supporters who help protect and defend Nazi war criminals.

A spokesman for the St Petersburg group told reporters he joined the SS to fight Communism.

"The new attention to war criminals comes out of a conspiracy of Communists and Jews," he said.

Delegations have gone to the White House and Congress to stop the Justice Department pursuing war criminals.

Federal officers investigate war ties of Latvians, Nazis

By DAVID DAHL
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

Federal investigators traveled to the Suncoast last week to ask at least four members of the local Latvian community about their relationships with German forces during World War II.

The Latvians say the federal officials also questioned them about a St. Petersburg-based Latvian organization whose members include former soldiers in the Nazi-supervised Latvian Legion.

"They told me I am free, not accused of anything," said Val Tuklers, 61, who resigned as vice president of the local Daugavas Vanagi organization, or D.V., after a three-hour interview with federal officials Aug. 8.

Attention to St. Petersburg's Latvian community grew this year after federal authorities arrested local resident Konrads Kalejs on charges he lied about his affiliation with Nazi forces when he entered the United States.

Authorities say Kalejs, 71, is suspected of helping Nazis slaughter residents of a Latvian village.

As many as 500 Suncoast residents are natives of Latvia, a small country overrun by the Soviet Union and then the Germans during World War II. The country was absorbed by the Soviet Union after the war.

The Latvian community is in an uproar because of the investigation, Tuklers said Thursday. "As far as I am concerned, I can handle it. But the community is very, very upset," Tuklers said.

St. Petersburg police say some members of the local community were uncooperative during the search for Kalejs. Kalejs and Austra Kalnins, a woman charged with trying to hide him, are scheduled for separate trials this fall.

A spokesman for the federal Office of Special Investi-

gations (OSI), charged with finding Nazis and Nazi collaborators, confirmed Thursday that investigators were in the St. Petersburg area recently. However, the spokesman refused to elaborate.

Along with Tuklers, the OSI investigators interviewed Arvids Bumbulis, 79, of St. Petersburg; Andris Lamberts of St. Petersburg; and Erik Parups, 70, of Bradenton.

A fifth man, Karlis Augstkalns, an 80-year-old former major in the Latvian Legion, was asked to go to Tampa for an interview but declined because of his health, according to his wife.

Both Lamberts and Parups said they have assisted the OSI investigators in the past and answered questions about their background and that of other area Latvians.

Bumbulis, a U.S. citizen since 1950, said that during his interview last week, he showed the investigators where he was in Latvia during World War II. He told a reporter Thursday that an injured hand kept him from fighting in the war.

After the OSI interview, Bumbulis resigned from the D.V., he said.

According to Tuklers, he and Bumbulis resigned from the organization because of fears the interviews would injure the reputation of the local Latvian community.

Tuklers said he is a Canadian citizen who moved here in the 1970s. He once owned a motel in Pinellas County and now lives in a waterfront home at 7825 Second Ave. S.

Tuklers said that during the war he attended Nazi classes on gas warfare, ammunition and arms engineering. He later was awarded the Iron Cross by the Germans for attacking two Russian tanks, he said. In 1944, he said, he escaped to Sweden.

When he went to Canada in 1951, he said, immigration officials did not ask him about his background.

Tuklers said he answered questions about the war years, other Latvians in the area and his membership in the D.V.

The D.V., a worldwide organization, has about 30 members in Pinellas County. The local chapter incorporated Feb. 7, 1985, according to state records.

Tuklers said it is a relief organization that gives aid to Latvians. It meets about once a month in a building north of downtown St. Petersburg.

Nazi collaborator released



ERICA BERGER / Miami Herald Staff

Konrads Kalejs left the Krome Avenue detention camp Monday night.

Accused war criminal freed on a \$750,000 cash bond

By FABIOLA SANTIAGO
Herald Staff Writer

Suspected Nazi war criminal Konrads Kalejs walked out of the Krome Avenue detention camp Monday night on orders from Washington.

Deputy U.S. Attorney General Lowell Jensen allowed Kalejs to be released on a \$750,000 cash bond posted in Chicago.

Both INS officials and an immigration judge in Miami had denied bond for Kalejs, 72, saying he was once a fugitive and would flee again. The Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington, however, granted Kalejs bond after he and a friend pledged to tie up hundreds of thousands of dollars in U.S. assets in exchange for bond.

At the request of INS Commissioner Alan Nelson and the Office of Special Investigations, which tracked Kalejs to a Miami Beach hotel last April and strongly opposed bond, the attorney general's office agreed to review the case — a procedure that officials said is seldom used.

Then Jensen, acting on behalf of U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, who was out of

town, stayed the board's bond, pending further review of the case.

Late Friday, however, Jensen signed an order affirming the appeals board's decision and granting Kalejs bond, Justice Department spokesman Dean St. Dennis said.

"As the acting attorney general, Lowell Jensen reviewed this matter and he had the authority to either affirm the decision or deny it," St. Dennis said Monday night. "He reviewed it and on Friday signed an order affirming the decision, granting the bond."

Asked for Jensen's reasons, St. Dennis said he didn't know. He said Jensen was not available for comment.

"We have nothing more to say tonight," St. Dennis said.

Asked if Meese were aware of the decision, he said: "I'm told that Mr. Meese knows nothing about this case." Meese was also not available for comment, St. Dennis said.

At the Office of Special Investigations in Washington, D.C., the so-called "Nazi hunters"

Kalejs freed from Krome

FREE / from 1B

who arrested Kalejs — a Latvian accused of helping the SS army murder thousands of Jews 40 years ago — said little about Kalejs' release.

"That's the decision rendered and obviously we have to abide by it," OSI director Neal Sher said. "Our purpose now is to see that he comes to trial."

Kalejs is scheduled to appear at a deportation hearing Sept. 30. The U.S. government wants to return him to Australia, his country of citizenship.

"He is illegally here. He lied about being involved in wartime persecution," Sher said.

Kalejs stated in his request for U.S. residency in 1959 that he was a farm hand in Latvia during the war.

Under Justice Department procedures, a Board of Immigration Appeals ruling can be appealed "internally" to the attorney general, St. Dennis said.

"I'm told the decision affirming the Board of Immigration Appeals means the person can now post the bond if he can and wants to," he said.

Kalejs cannot be prosecuted in the United States for war crimes because they were not committed here, Sher said.

"He's been required to put up a lot of money. I'm hopeful he won't flee," he said.

In Miami, INS district director Perry Rivkind, who had vehemently opposed bond, said he had to accept the attorney general's decision.

"If the attorneys up there feel that bond is sufficient to secure his appearance, I would support their decision on that basis," Rivkind said. "They look at it dispassionately and very objectively."

✓ MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI NEWS

OTHER

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DATE 7-2-85

Please turn to FREE / 3B

Widow gets probation for hiding suspected Nazi

By MILO GEYELIN
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — A soft-spoken Latvian emigre who helped a man accused of Nazi-linked war crimes escape capture in Pinellas County earlier this year pleaded guilty Monday to federal charges stemming from the case.

Austra Kalnins, a 67-year-old widow, was accused of harboring a fugitive, a misdemeanor that carries a maximum sentence of one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine. But in exchange for her plea, federal prosecutors agreed to recommend leniency. Later Monday afternoon, U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich sentenced Mrs. Kalnins to five years' probation.

Mrs. Kalnins declined comment as she left the U.S. District Court in Tampa on Monday afternoon. But while her legal troubles may be over, the fate of the man she helped — Latvian-born Konrad Kalejs — is far from certain.

ACCORDING TO the U.S. Department of Justice, Kalejs, 72, helped Nazi occupiers during World War II round up and murder "thousands of unarmed Jews, gypsies and other civilians throughout Latvia." From 1941 to 1944, according to federal investigators, Kalejs was an officer in the Arajs Kommando, a Latvian branch of the Nazi SS.

He served first as a lieutenant and later as a company commander, say attorneys for the Office of Investigations at the U.S. Department of Justice. Kalejs (pronounced KAH-leys) allegedly directed the destruction of an entire village in Latvia in 1942, ordering the execution of all its residents.

Kalejs faces no criminal prosecution for the alleged war crimes. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service is seeking to deport him for concealing his Nazi connections when he entered the United States in 1959. By then a citizen of Australia, Kalejs told immigration officials that he

had been a farm laborer in Latvia from 1941 to 1944.

Kalejs lived with Mrs. Kalnins and her husband Albert for 25 years in Chicago. When Albert Kalnins died in a car accident three years ago, he left his wife two apartment buildings in Skokie, Ill., condominiums in Fort Lauderdale, two homes in the suburbs of Chicago and a house just north of St. Petersburg, at 5821 41st Ave. N.

IT WAS there that federal officials believe Mrs. Kalnins and Kalejs lived until last February, when a federal arrest warrant was issued for Kalejs' arrest. The warrant required him to appear in court to explain to immigration officials why he shouldn't be deported to Australia for lying on his entry application in 1959.

Mrs. Kalnins was accused of lying when asked by U.S. marshals if she knew where Kalejs could be found. In her plea agreement Monday, Mrs. Kalnins admitted that she drove Kalejs to the Blue Nose Motel in Treasure Island on March 15, where Kalejs had checked out a room under a false name, C. Michelson.

A week later, Kalejs fled to Miami, where Mrs. Kalnins paid a \$1,397 Visa credit card bill — also under the name of C. Michelson — so he could buy a one-way ticket to Australia, according to her plea agreement. Federal authorities caught up with Kalejs in Miami, however, and he was arrested in April.

KALEJS WAS held at the Krome Avenue detention center until June, when Mrs. Kalnins posted a \$750,000 cash bond for his release. Kalejs is now living in Winnetka, Ill., and his deportation hearing has been transferred to Chicago.

Officials of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service district office in Chicago have refused to discuss the Kalejs case. But even if he's deported to Australia, it's unclear whether Kalejs will ever face trial on the war crimes charges.

Australian officials have said Kalejs would have to be prosecuted in Latvia, which was annexed by the Soviet Union after the war. Australia, however, does not have an extradition treaty with the Soviet Union, said William Ginnivan, in charge of immigration matters at the Australian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Ginnivan said he did not know if Australia would cooperate with an extradition request from the Soviet Union.

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UNREST IN LATVIA

"Violent scuffles" on two recent occasions in Riga, the Latvian capital, resulted in the arrest of 300 Latvian youths who had been demonstrating to back demands that the Soviet Union leave Latvia, according to a spokesman for the Latvian World Federation in Stockholm.

—Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol. 3, No. 25, 1985



"Beware the march of AIDS."