

Tape Details Latvian Massacre

By James Bernstein

New York—A former Latvian police officer detailed charges that Boleslavs Maikovskis, accused of complicity in mass murders during the German occupation of Latvia during World War II, organized and supervised a firing squad that exterminated about 200 residents of a Latvian village in 1941.

The videotaped testimony of Anton Zhukovskis, 76, the police officer, continued for the second day before U.S. Immigration Judge Francis J. Lyons during the third day of hearings aimed at deporting Maikovskis, 75, a retired carpenter who lives in Mineola. He has been accused of complicity in the deaths of 20,000 Latvian Jews and was sentenced to death in absentia by a Soviet court in 1965.

About a dozen spectators, including reporters, immigration officials and members of Jewish rights' organizations, watched intently as the voice of Zhukovskis, a retired farmer, filled the room in the Jacob K. Javits Building at 26 Federal Plaza.

Maikovskis, as he has since the hearings began Monday, sat expressionless and nearly motionless. He watched Zhukovskis' face on the small, color screen propped up on a chair in the front of the courtroom as his attorney, Ivar Birzens, and a Latvian interpreter, sat by his side.

The government is attempting, as it

has since the on-again, off-again hearings first began in 1976, to prove that Maikovskis, a permanent resident alien of this country, falsely swore, when he entered the U.S. in 1951, that he had never participated in any World War II atrocities. Maikovskis has denied any role in the extermination of Jews in Latvia, saying the charges against him were "Communist propaganda." He faces deportation if the government can prove he lied.

Zhukovskis, who was interviewed in Latvia on May 18 by U.S. Justice Department trial attorney Jeffrey Mausner, spoke evenly and with little trace of emotion about the shooting of some 200 residents in the village of Audrini in 1941.

Question (Mausner): Where was Mr. Maikovskis when the Jews were being shot?

Answer (Zhukovskis): He was standing behind, behind the firing squad.

Q: What was he doing when the shooting was going on?

A: Simple. He just walked around. He just looked at things. He just noticed things.

Q: Do you remember an incident involving a family with a girl who was to be shot . . . ?

A: Yes, I remember. There was the father. There was the mother. There was a young girl. They begged. 'Do not shoot.'

The father said, 'I'm not Jewish.' But they didn't listen to their requests . . . They shot them."

Q: Did Mr. Maikovskis ask for volunteers for the firing squad?

A: Yes. He walked around and said, 'Are there any volunteers who would like to go and avenge the lives of the two policemen?' [Immigration investigators have said that the 200 were killed in reprisal after one of Maikovskis' men was shot by an anti-Nazi partisan in the village.]

Q: Were police doing the shooting under Maikovskis' control?

A: They had their small chiefs and they had their big chiefs. Maikovskis was responsible for everybody.

In other testimony, Samuel Zutty of Oak Beach, a retired U.S. Immigration investigator who said he interviewed Maikovskis in the mid-1970s, identified Maikovskis from a photograph taken during the war. He said he had seen the photograph in a Latvian newspaper. The photo, government investigators said, shows Maikovskis wearing a German uniform with Latvian insignias. Maikovskis has told immigration investigators he is not the man in the photograph. Birzens objected to the photo being admitted into evidence, saying that its "origins" had not been determined. Lyons overruled him.



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Maikovskis leaving court