

# US government paid millions in Social Security benefits to ex-Nazis

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The US government paid more than \$20 million worth of retirement benefits to at least 133 former Nazis over a period of more than 50 years, according to an internal auditing report released by the US Social Security Administration (SSA) last Saturday.

Many of the recipients of the federally administered retirement benefit checks were directly involved in the extermination camps and other atrocities, serving as guards, commandos, administrators and executioners with the SS and other Nazi units.

The volume of payments grew rapidly from the 1990s onward, rising from at least \$1.5 million in 1999 to at least \$20 million by 2015, according to the Associated Press. Some of the ex-Nazis were induced to leave the country by the Department of Justice (DOJ), which quietly made known that those who left the country voluntarily would continue to receive their benefit checks. At least \$14 million was disbursed to Nazis who were never forced to leave the US at all, according to the SSA.

The SSA payments were apparently continued in order to maintain good relations between Washington and its ex-Nazi clientele, while also avoiding an unnecessary public airing of the matter. The benefits payments allowed the DOJ “to skirt lengthy deportation hearings,” the *Times of Israel* noted in a recent report.

Responding to the initial exposure of the payments by an Associated Press report published in October 2014, the US Congress passed the “No Social Security for Nazis Act” last December. Nonetheless, another round of pension checks was reportedly sent to some of ex-Nazis this January, an “accident” the US government has promised will be the last of its kind.

The US government has refused to release a list of recipients' names. Research by the Associated Press, however, has uncovered details concerning a small

number of the recipients:

\* John Avdzej became military governor of portions of Belarus during the Nazi invasion of the USSR, directing mass roundups and executions against the local Jewish population. Avdzej agreed to leave the US for West Germany in 1984, where he continued to receive SSA checks until his death in 1998.

\* Nazi rocket scientist Arthur Rudolf was granted asylum in the US on the grounds that he possessed valuable technical skills, despite overseeing the use of slave labor at a Nazi V-2 rocket production factory during the war. Rudolf signed a “settlement agreement” with the US government in 1983 after his involvement with the regime's use of slave labor was exposed, and he left the US for West Germany the following year, where he formally repudiated his US citizenship at an American diplomatic facility in Hamburg.

Rudolf continued to receive checks from the SSA until his death from heart failure in 1996.

\* Former Nazi SS member Jakob Dezinger, who served with a Death's Head battalion, the special units tasked with running the extermination and forced labor camps, after joining the SS in 1942. Dezinger moved to Ohio after the war, where he enjoyed a prosperous career as an executive at a plastics producer.

\* Martin Hartmann, also a member of the SS Death's Head battalions, was a guard at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, enjoyed US citizenship until 2007, when he moved to Berlin as part of a deal to keep his SSA benefits. Official records show that Hartmann had informed the US government about his membership in the SS immediately after the war.

\* Elfriede Rinkel, a guard at the Ravensbrueck concentration camp who settled in California after the war, was the only female ex-Nazi ever prosecuted by the DoJ. She continued to receive SSA checks after

agreeing to leave the US in 2006.

These examples, merely the tip of the iceberg, once again confirm that despite decades of fraudulent anti-Nazi posturing by the US political establishment, active and enthusiastic Nazis were allowed to continue living and working comfortably on American soil for decades after the war's end, before enjoying a secure retirement at US government expense.

Anything but accidental, this outcome was produced by policies orchestrated over decades by the US government. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) routinely shielded, employed and financially supported known and suspected Nazi war criminals for decades after the end of World War II. At least 10,000 former Nazis entered the US between 1948-1952, according to investigations by the DOJ.

Such routinized and systematic support can only be explained as the product of the common interests of US capitalism and Germany's Nazi regime.

While rivals for domination of the world market, US and German imperialism were united by common hatred and fear of the USSR, the first workers' state that had emerged out of the 1917 October Revolution. Though not without anxieties about unconstrained German domination of Europe, the US ruling class still viewed the Nazis and their backers as a useful bulwark against the threat of further seizures of power by the working class.

After the war, the US became a leading refuge for former Nazis. State agencies, including the CIA and FBI, recruited Nazis into the government while systematically concealing their presence from the public.

Washington recruited former Nazi spymasters to create an anti-Soviet espionage network, originally known as the Gehlen Organization, named after chief of military intelligence for the Eastern Front, Reinhard Gehlen.

After being packed with former Nazi cadres, including entire units of former Nazi SS men, under American supervision, the Gehlen Organization went on to become the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), which remains the official West German intelligence service up to the present.

The US government relied heavily on former SS troopers as it sought to assemble anti-Soviet

paramilitary and intelligence units known as "stay behind" forces. Nazis who participated in the clandestine units were later rewarded by the CIA with bonus checks and arrangements that allowed them to resettle in Canada and Australia.

The \$20 million in SSA checks was pocket change for the many other ex-Nazis and their descendants who continue to occupy positions of power and privilege within the German corporate and political establishment.

Nonetheless, the latest exposure of US benefit payments to Nazis starkly illustrates the longstanding fraternal relations between US imperialism and fascism. Abetted by Wall Street and Washington DC, the perpetrators of the worst crimes against humanity in history have largely gotten off scot-free, with US government pensions thrown in to boot.



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