

## Soviets provide data on suspected ex-Nazi

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By HERB JAFFE

A package of affidavits and other documents which strongly support allegations that Passaic County public employe Tschirim Soobzokov participated in World War II crimes as a Nazi collaborator has been made available by a high-ranking Soviet official.

Valentin Kamenev, first secretary and counselor of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, produced the package of documents which tell how Soobzokov allegedly served the Nazis in the Caucasus region of the Soviet Union during the period of 1942-43.

Kamenev presented the package last week to Nazi war crimes researcher and author Charles R. Allen Jr. of New York, based on a request made by Allen last April.

Allen's request to the Soviets for information on Soobzokov followed a detailed series of articles in The Star-Ledger last spring which revealed Soobzokov's activities as an alleged Nazi and later in behalf of U.S. intelligence agencies, after he came to America from Jordan in 1955.

The documents are an "official response" to Allen's request, according to Kamenev, who is the third highest ranking official in the Soviet Embassy.

Included in the package turned over by Kamenev are affidavits from 18 persons, most of whom presently live in the same Caucasus region where the alleged atrocities were committed by the Nazi-established "punitive" unit which Soobzokov supposedly headed.

Several of the affidavits were given to Soviet prosecutors this year by relatives of persons allegedly slain by the same unit. All were given under the Rus-

sian equivalent of "sworn testimony," which involves a severe penalty for false statements.

Soobzokov's nephew, Yakhia Mosovitch Soobzokov, stated in one of the affidavits that he saw his uncle for the last time in February, 1943, when German occupation forces were retreating. "He still wore his German uniform at that time," the nephew said, adding that he retreated with the Nazi army.

Other affidavits which place Soobzokov in the Nazi unit that is accused of killing, plundering and committing other atrocities against civilians were given to Soviet prosecutors by a brother-in-law of

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**STRONGLY SUPPORT CHARGE AGAINST PASSAIC AIDE**

# New documents released in Nazi probe

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his first marriage and the father of his second and present wife.

Soobzokov, who is chief inspector of the Passaic County Purchasing Department, has lived in Paterson with his wife and children since he arrived in the U.S. He is active in local politics and is a self-proclaimed leader of the sizable Circassian-immigrant community in Passaic County.

The affidavit of Tagir Umarovitch Afazishev, taken last February, says that Afazishev served as Soobzokov's squad commander in August 1942, in the

800th Battalion of the North Caucasian National Legion of the German Army.

According to Afazishev, Soobzokov later became a platoon commander. He said that aside from Soobzokov's activities in the punitive unit, he recalls an intense battle in November 1942 in which Soobzokov and his unit fought against "the Soviet troop defenders of Height 229."

Afazishev, who has served a sentence in a Russian prison for his role as a member of the collaborator unit, said he last saw Soobzokov in the summer of 1943 in the Kherson District of the Ukraine. "He was already a German Army

officer by then, but I don't know what his rank was," Afazishev said.

Captured war records which are now in the Berlin Document Center reveal that Soobzokov was a first lieutenant in the notorious Waffen SS when World War II ended.

However, Soobzokov has constantly denied that he served in a punitive unit. In a \$10 million libel suit which he has filed against the author, publisher and others connected with the book "Wanted: The Search for Nazis in America," Soobzokov contends he spent 2 1/2 years behind German lines leading a band of men, women and children to safety.

Furthermore, Soobzokov says that he wore a German uniform as a facade, to help him obtain falsified documents to enable safe passage for his refugee group.

But in sworn statements and other official documents in U.S. Government files, Soobzokov tells differing versions of his activities in the war, many of which conflict.

It is partly as a result of Soobzokov's conflicting versions that a federal grand jury was empaneled in June 1977 to look into his past and to deter-

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## NEW DOCUMENTS FURTHER IMPLICATE PASSAIC EMPLOYEE

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mine if there were any irregularities by other federal agencies relating to Soobzokov.

Among those agencies related to the grand jury's Soobzokov investigation are the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

But the investigation has taken a downward turn in the last several months, with little information being presented to the grand jury by the office of U.S. Attorney Robert Fiske of the Southern District of Manhattan.

Fiske will not discuss the Soobzokov

case, and the chief of his criminal section, Thomas Engle, has stated only that the matter is "still under active consideration. It will be decided one way or another."

Neither Harry Balchelder or Jerry Siegel, assistant U.S. attorneys connected with the case, will discuss the matter. Siegel, in fact, said only, "I'm involved in another trial right now."

Yet the same package of documents which Kamenev provided Allen has been in the hands of the U.S. Attorney since last May, when retired INS investigator

Tony DeVito returned from a three-week trip in the Soviet Union with similar material and presented it to the U.S. Attorney.

DeVito, who was deeply involved in the investigation that resulted in the 1973 extradition to West Germany of former Queens housewife Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan — accused of being a Nazi concentration camp official — spent five weeks in Russia last winter.

He brought back several affidavits and documents then which alleged that Soobzokov had participated in the deaths of civilians.

DeVito made initial contact with Soviet officials a year ago, and they subsequently provided him with the documents he requested during his first visit. Following that trip, all further affidavits taken by Russian prosecutors carry the following opening language:

"Relating to the request of the U.S.A. organs of justice, to render to them our legal assistance in the matter of Tschermir Soobzokov . . ."

Despite the fact that INS last October said it was reopening its on-again, off-again investigation of Soobzokov, no one else has yet gone to the Soviet Union

to interview the many witnesses whom Kamenev said the Russians are willing to make available to U.S. authorities, to directly provide testimony relating to Soobzokov's war activities.

Martin Mendelsohn, INS' deputy chief counsel who has expressed a new U.S. commitment to denaturalize and deport ex-Nazis, spent a month in Russia during July and August.

But Mendelsohn did not speak to any of the Soviets' witnesses relating to Soobzokov, nor would Mendelsohn even discuss the matter of a pending investigation.

As for the U.S. attorney's investigation in Manhattan, sources say "that may be inhibited by intervention from the State Department," which has protected Soobzokov's interests in the past, according to documents in INS' Soobzokov file.

No one from Fiske's office will even acknowledge that the Soviet documents are in their possession, much less say whether the information in the documents has been presented to the grand jury.

When asked by Allen if Soobzokov is wanted by the Soviets as a war criminal or collaborator, Kamenev replied:

"Read the documents. You will see that this is a grave matter. There should be more forthcoming."

The U.S. does not have an extradition treaty with Russia. But Kamenev said that Soviet prosecutors in Moscow are well aware of the grand jury investigation and have closely examined the Star-Ledger articles of last spring as well as free-lance articles Allen has written on the subject.

The Soviet diplomat also said that the State Department was given a full set of the same documents earlier this year.

Like the U.S. attorney's office, INS also falls under the Department of Justice. During past investigations of Soobzokov by INS — all of which were ended with no cause for further action — the State Department made formal inquiries to the Soviet Union which supposedly produced no incriminating data, according to memos in the INS file.

In response to the past State Department inquiries to Moscow about Soobzokov, Kamenev told Allen, "their inquiries were not very good."

Last spring The Star-Ledger provided details in the form of correspondence between Soobzokov and U.S. intelligence officials, and a substantial quantity of other documents, revealing how Soobzokov was employed by either the CIA or FBI, and possibly by both. At one point, he was assigned to Amman, Jordan to find two generals sympathetic to the West.

Government files show the State Department first had contact with Soobzokov for several years prior to the time he obtained his visa for entrance to the U.S. from Amman.

The INS file also contains the names of three civilian men who were executed by the punitive unit with which Soobzokov allegedly was associated in 1942.

Affidavits provided by Kamenev include relatives of two of these three, plus the widow of a fourth. All of them identify either Soobzokov or others as being in the same punitive unit.

Two of the affidavits include members of the same punitive unit who talked about the unit's function, and who have since served sentences in Soviet prisons. One of them identified Soobzokov as a platoon commander who held the rank of sergeant.

One man who detailed in his affidavit how two civilians were arrested and later shot by the punitive unit, said that at no time did any officials from the U.S. ever come to him to inquire of atrocities committed in that region, "either by telephone or in writing."

He said in his affidavit that no official ever spoke to him before about Soobzokov or his role.

Another man, Eristem Khagurov, who said he served with Soobzokov, and has since served a sentence in prison for being a Nazi collaborator, explained in his affidavit:

"Soon after he joined our battalion, Tschermir Soobzokov was made a platoon commander in the first company. I was a private in his platoon at that time."

He described Soobzokov as being "tall and slender, sort of lean, with an oblong face and black hair." Soobzokov is tall and somewhat slender, although his black hair has begun to turn gray.

"When he joined us, he was wearing a German uniform and his rank was that of a top sergeant. He carried a pistol," Khagurov said, "as distinguished from privates who carried rifles."

"I believe I would recognize his picture of that time," he added.

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