

Holocaust Jew accused of war crimes

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An old Jewish man who took his own cold-blooded revenge against Germans for the Holocaust will not be extradited back to Poland from Israel to answer charges of genocide.

The case of Solomon Morel, 86, is the only one in Holocaust history where a Jew stands accused of war crimes against Germans.

It has perplexed legal minds in both countries. Poland says genocide is genocide whether a Jew or a Nazi committed it, while many Israelis see rough justice in the 1500 German deaths for which Mr Morel is alleged to be responsible.

Now the Israeli Government has said that Mr Morel will not be sent back to stand trial in Poland under any circumstances.

Mr Morel, who came from the little Polish town of Grabowo, claims he was an Auschwitz survivor whose family was murdered by the Nazis during World War II. A book, *An Eye for an Eye*, which documents his strange life, claims his family was indeed liquidated, but by Poles who collaborated with the Nazis. It also says that he was never imprisoned by the Germans.

By 1943 he was employed peeling potatoes for a Jewish partisan brigade before escaping to the Soviet Union, where he trained in the gruesome interrogation methods of the NKVD, Stalin's political police, before returning to Poland in 1945. He was then put in charge by the communists of a camp containing thousands of German prisoners including SS men, soldiers and civilians.

John Sack, the Jewish-American author of *An Eye for an Eye*, claims Mr Morel, as commandant of Swietochlowice Camp, morphed into the kind of monster that would have been welcomed by the Gestapo.

"His favourite method of killing prisoners was hacking the skull of his victims with a wooden leg of a chair," according to the book. "It is quite possible that in Swietochlowice several thousand persons were murdered by Morel and his men."

They would beat them and throw the bodies out of the window."

Camp survivor

Sack's book, and a score of Polish books and newspaper articles, said he beat, shot, starved, tortured and killed with gusto in the camp.

"I knew Morel in the camp. He was a very brutal man," survivor Dorota Boriczek said. "He was young then. He would come in at night. We could hear the cries of the men then. They would beat them and throw the bodies out of the window."

In 1989, a Polish reporter found Mr Morel living in a part of Katowice assigned for former uniformed functionaries of communist terror.

In the early 1990s, the Main Commission for the Investigations of Crimes Against the Polish Nation started an official investigation of Mr Morel's activities in the Swietochlowice Camp after witness articles appeared in the press.

In 1994, Mr Morel sought political asylum in Sweden. This was refused. He then successfully sought sanctuary in Israel.

Poland tried to extradite him seven years ago on torture charges. Israel refused. So prosecutors began preparing a genocide case, for which there is no statute of limitations.

Last week, they received a blank refusal from Israel saying "there was no basis whatsoever" to extradite Mr Morel.

A Polish prosecutor said testimony from former inmates documented Mr Morel's torture of at least 13 prisoners.

"There should be one measure for judging war criminals, irrespective whether they are German, Israeli, or any other nationality," the prosecutor said.

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