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THE NAZI COLLABORATOR MONUMENT PROJECT

Nazi collaborator monuments in Belgium

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There are hundreds of statues and monuments in the United States and around the world to people who abetted or took part in the murder of Jews and other minorities during the Holocaust. The Forward has, for the first time, documented them in this collection of articles. For a guide to each country's memorials [click here](#).

Update (January 2022): the Forward's investigation of Zedelgem's monument triggered an international outcry, including from the Latvian government. See [here](#) for a [series](#) of [three](#) articles in Paris Match Belgique (Google translations [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

A group of historians, journalists and activists has convinced the Zedelgem municipality to [remove](#) the “explanatory board” whitewashing the Latvian SS unit honored by the monument, while an international [panel](#) of historians condemned the beehive. However, this issue is very much ongoing, with heavy pressure coming from the [Latvian government](#) to keep the monument to the Waffen-SS.

[Report](#) on the Zedelgem monument by international panel of 15 historians. Detailed collection of this ongoing controversy by [The Belgians Remember Them](#) group which played a seminal part in fighting the whitewashing.

Zedelgem — A monument to the Waffen-SS in the middle of Western Europe.

The description of this “Latvian Beehive for Freedom,” erected in 2018, says it “symbolizes freedom in all its aspects,” adding it’s in memory of Latvian prisoners of war who’d been imprisoned in a nearby camp. The [sculptor describes it](#) as uniting “the common European values and symbol language understood by all Europeans with something special and visually characteristic only to Latvia.”

What the monument doesn't contain is symbols of the Waffen-SS, which is who the “beehive for freedom” commemorates. The Latvian prisoners of war were none other than the Latvian Legion, a unit in the Waffen-SS, which was the military wing of the Nazi party responsible for, among other crimes, the Holocaust. Many of the men in the Legion came from local [auxiliary police battalions](#), which assisted the Germans with massacring Jews. [Three-quarters](#) of Latvian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.

The Legion was composed of the 15th Waffen Grenadier (1st Latvian) and the 19th Waffen Grenadier (2nd Latvian) divisions in the Waffen-SS. The [Anti-Defamation League](#) shows the [15th Division's insignia](#) as an example of hate signs used by neo-Nazis.

Today, [Latvia itself](#) hosts [annual marches](#) celebrating [Latvian Legionnaires](#), where hundreds of SS veterans are cheered as heroes.

It's unclear how this monument (which was partly and proudly [paid for](#) by the town) came to be an hour's drive from EU headquarters. It's likely that the whitewashing of Nazi collaborators as "freedom fighters" — a common tactic employed by Holocaust revisionists across Eastern Europe — worked, which is why a town in Belgium, which lost 12,000 soldiers and 74,000 civilians [to the Nazis](#), now has a monument celebrating the Waffen-SS.

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Below, a Latvian collaborator kicks the bodies of Jewish women and children into a ditch after their execution, December 15, 1942.

Below, Latvian SS veterans and their relatives march in a parade celebrating the Latvian Legion, March 16, 2012.

For more glorification of Latvian Waffen-SS soldiers, see the [Latvia](#) section.

Nazi collaborator monuments around the world

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