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Nazi-affiliated emigres and the Republican Party

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The departure of seven ethnic leaders from volunteer roles in George Bush's presidential campaign has exposed a relationship stretching back four decades between the national Republican Party and Nazi-affiliated Eastern European emigres.

Esposing a staunch anti-communism, the emigres have included some individuals who were connected—as the seven Bush volunteers were said to be—with anti-Semitic or fascist organizations and viewpoints.

To be sure, hundreds of ethnic leaders and volunteers involved in Republican politics have no connection whatever to Nazi or anti-Semitic attitudes.

But according to a report published by a nonprofit, political research institute, the Bush campaign's ethnic organization is an outgrowth of an emigre network dating to the Cold War days of the 1950s that included some former Nazi collaborators.

That network has played a significant role in shaping American foreign policy, according to the report, based on four years of study by Detroit researcher Russ Bellant and issued Thursday by Political Research Associates in Cambridge, Mass.

"A combination of ignorance, amnesia and in some cases political sympathy have allowed both American and European abettors of the Third Reich to play a prominent and respectable role inside the Republican Party," the report says. "In many cases, these fascists are unrepentant about their past as enemies of the United States and as supporters of Nazi genocide."

The report—titled "Old Nazis, the New Right and the Reagan Administration: The Role of Domestic Fascist Networks in the Republican Party and Their Effect on U.S. Cold War Policies"—traces the evolution of the National Republican Heritage Groups Council, an umbrella organization of ethnic groups that grew out of Republican efforts to court those groups during the 1952 presidential campaign.

"... Ignorance, amnesia and in some cases political sympathy have allowed both American and European abettors of the Third Reich to play a ... role inside the Republican Party," the report says.

It says that many council members and leaders are Eastern European emigres who were welcomed to the United States during the Cold War because of their anti-communism, even though many had collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II.

This year, some council members became leaders of the Coalition of American Nationalities, a group established by George Bush's presidential campaign to recruit support among ethnic voters.

The Bush campaign's original list of coalition members consisted of 88 names, with their ethnic affiliations listed as Arab, Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak and Ukrainian.

The fact that some extreme elements from Eastern Europe have found a home in the GOP is perhaps best illustrated by the presence on the 1972 presidential campaign's ethnic coalition of three men who subsequently were investigated by the U.S. government for alleged Nazi war crimes.

According to documents and interviews, the ethnic coalition of the Nixon-Agnew re-election campaign included one man who subsequently was successfully prosecuted by the U.S. government for deportation for war crimes, another against whom the government failed to prove its case, and a third who died while the government was preparing to bring him to trial.

No war-crimes allegations have been leveled against any member of the Bush coalition. But Bellant says the GOP's ethnic coalitions historically have served the political goals of central and eastern European emigre leaders who were involved in pro-Nazi or fascist organizations during the war.

The Bush campaign's Coalition of American Nationalities, assembled from lists of ethnic Americans long active in the GOP, was announced by the vice president at a news conference Aug. 2 at the National Press Club in Washington.

The Bush campaign's ethnic coalition had been in place for little more than a month when the Washington



Boleslavs Matkovskis
War criminal linked to GOP

Jewish Week alleged Sept. 8 that several coalition members had links to anti-Semitic or fascist organizations. All six members named in that article, and a seventh member identified by The Inquirer on Sept. 10 as having apparent similar affiliations, resigned or were dropped from the coalition.

An eighth Bush associate, Frederic V. Malek, resigned as deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee after the Washington Post reported that he had conducted a survey of Jews in top-level positions at the Bureau of Labor Statistics during the Nixon administration.

The ethnic coalition in the Bush campaign has roots in the National Republican Heritage Groups Council, an arm of the Republican National Committee that was formed in 1969 by Laszlo Pastor, the report says.

Pastor was the national co-chairman of Hungarians for Bush until his resignation last week following the report in the Washington Jewish Week, which linked him to Hungary's wartime pro-Nazi Arrow Cross regime.

The heritage groups council was created by President Richard Nixon, fol-

lowing through on a 1968 campaign promise to form an ongoing ethnic division within the Republican Party, according to the report.

After World War II, the Displaced Persons Commission allowed thousands of Nazi collaborators into the United States because of their anti-communist positions, the report says. They were drawn into the Republican Party during the 1952 presidential campaign because of the party's campaign promises to "liberate" communist-dominated nations in Eastern Europe, the report says.

"Displaced fascists hoping to be returned to power by an Eisenhower-Nixon liberation policy were among those who signed on. This would become the embryo for the formation of the Republican Heritage Groups Council in 1969," the report says. The Ethnic Division of the Republican National Committee was active during each campaign from 1952 to 1968.

According to documents and interviews, the Latvian-American section of the 1972 Heritage Groups for the Re-election of the President included on its advisory board:

- Boleslavs Matkovskis, 84, of Mineola, N.Y., who was ordered deported in 1984 after he admitted to the Justice Department that men acting on his orders had arrested more than 100 residents of Rēzekne, Latvia while he was the town's police chief and then burned the town to the ground. In June 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court denied his petition for a review of the case, and he is awaiting deportation.

- Matkovskis was "one of the most notorious" war criminals successfully prosecuted by the Justice Department, according to Allen A. Ryan Jr., who was director of the department's Office of Special Investigations from January 1980 until September 1983, during which time the case was tried.

- Vilis Hazners of Whitehall, N.Y., a former Latvian Waffen SS captain who

was acquitted of war-crimes charges in 1980 after the U.S. government failed to prove charges that he had commanded a Nazi group that herded dozens of Jews into a synagogue in Riga, Latvia, and set it on fire.

In addition, the co-chairman of Byelorussian-Americans for the Re-election of the President in 1972 was:

- Stanislaus Stankevich of New York City, a former Byelorussian Nazi leader who served as the SS-appointed mayor of Borisov during a 1941 pogrom in which thousands of Jews were murdered. He died in 1982 as evidence was being prepared for a deportation case against him, sources said.

"I remember very clearly getting the news of his death," Ryan said Friday. "You can assume that I did not get the news of his death because I was a close friend of his."

The Republican Heritage Groups Council "appears to have consciously recruited some of its members, and even some of its leaders, from an Eastern European emigre network which includes anti-Semites, racists, authoritarians and fascists, including sympathizers and collaborators of Hitler's Third Reich, former Nazis and even possible war criminals," the report says.

Pastor did much of the recruiting, according to the report.

"The antidemocratic and racist components of the Republican Heritage Groups Council use anti-communist sentiments as a cover for their views while they operate as a de facto emigre fascist network within the Republican Party," the report says.

The report says that council members have influenced foreign policy partly through the American Security Council, a conservative think tank that acts as a clearinghouse for promilitary, anti-communist activities.

Ryan, now employed in the office of the general counsel at Harvard University, said he had read Bellant's report and found it to be "well-documented and reliable."

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