

Fired Bush backer one of several with possible Nazi link

BUSH, from 1-A
Office of Special Investigations.

On July 20, Fedorak introduced Bush to a joint meeting of the Detroit Captive Nations Committee and the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren, Mich. Bush nodded and applauded when Fedorak denounced the special-investigations office, according to Russell Bellant, a Detroit-based researcher and writer who attended the meeting as an observer.

Speaking before a Jewish audience in Baltimore on Thursday, Bush vowed his support for the Office of Special Investigations.

Galdau, Slavoff, Guarno and Fedorak are, according to Bellant, among several individuals who have long been active in the National Republican Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Council, which was formed in 1969 and includes more than 30 nationality federations and 25 state councils.

Bellant is the author of a detailed report to be issued later this month by the Independent Political Research Associates of Cambridge, Mass. In it he presents the affiliations of several ethnic leaders who have been active in the Republican Party since the early 1950s, focusing on several European emigre leaders with apparent ties to fascist regimes.

In the interview yesterday, Brentar said he has been a member of the

National Republican Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Council since the 1964 election, when he was asked to join by Joseph Bosiljevic, a native Croat, whom Brentar says he helped bring to Cleveland. Brentar said he was asked to join the Bush campaign by Ava Neterowicz, a Bush campaign official who phoned him from Washington.

"After this opportunity came up, I thought it would be a nice way to activate my allegiance to the endeavors of the Republican Party, the election of George Bush," Brentar said.

In remarks prepared for an Aug. 2 news conference in Washington announcing the formation of the national leadership of his Coalition of American Nationalities, Bush said that "the greatness of America has been fueled by the genius, the hard work and the ingenuity of the people who have come to her shores."

According to the press release for the occasion, the coalition is led by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R, N.Y.) and Edward Derwinski, undersecretary at the Department of State.

The group was formed to "address issues of importance to Americans of many different nationalities across the country on behalf of the vice president's campaign throughout the fall," the press release said.

During World War II, Brentar served in the U.S. Army in Germany,

France and Austria, he said. In a June 1982 disposition taken by the Justice Department in an unrelated case, Brentar said he had served as an escort officer for the International Refugee Organization in 1948 and 1949, then as an eligibility officer for the organization until July 1950. In the latter position, he said, he made eligibility determinations for people who applied for refugee status.

Refugee status would have been very difficult to obtain for members of the Waffen SS, whose duties under SS leader Heinrich Himmler ranged from personal bodyguards for Adolf Hitler to custodians and executioners at Nazi death camps. The International Tribunal at Nuremberg concluded after the war that the SS was a criminal organization.

Brentar said in the interview yesterday that, in all, he helped more than 1,000 displaced persons find homes in the United States.

Asked yesterday whether he had helped bring former members of the Nazi-aligned Croatian Ustachi into the United States, Brentar, who is of Croatian extraction, said: "Absolutely. I took them as they came. I went by the teachings of my childhood: that what you do unto the least of thy brethren you do unto him who was to judge.... I never asked what their past was.

Brentar said that he sent as many as 24 cases to an appeals board when he was unable to decide whether they should be allowed to emigrate.

In the interview, Brentar said he is the Cleveland president of the St. Raphael's Verein, or the St. Raphael Society, which was founded in Germany in 1871 to aid "travelers in need."

In 1946-47 the society's Rome chapter, headed by a German priest, Father Anton Weber, helped the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann flee to South America, according to Gitta Sereny of the London Sunday Times, who has researched the organization. Brentar said he was not aware that the society had assisted Eichmann but said he knew that Nazis had been helped by the society to leave Europe.

"To be frank with you, I was still relatively young," said Brentar, who would have been 28 in 1950. "They were soldiers like I was. The Ustachi were extreme Croats who endeavored to establish an independent state just like the Stern Gang or the Irugan gang in Israel. Yitzhak Shamir was known as a terrorist and so was (Menaschem) Begin, and now they're heroes."

The Ustachi were the militant followers of the Croatian fascist leader Ante Pavelic, whose reign of terror during Croatia's wartime alliance

with Nazi Germany resulted in the systematic mass murder of nearly a half-million Serbs, Gypsies and Jews.

Brentar was the main financial backer for the defense of former Cleveland autoworker John Demjanjuk, who was sentenced to death following his conviction by an Israeli court of operating gas chambers at the Treblinka death camp in Poland.

In a front-page dispatch from Bonn in October 1986, the Jerusalem Post listed Brentar as one of three American supporters of Demjanjuk who had been "trying for years to find 'false witnesses' in Poland." The article referred to Brentar's society as "an East European emigre organization [that] presents itself as defending Slavs from Jews."

In a March 1982 letter on the stationery of the society's Cleveland chapter, Brentar claimed to be a friend of a German writer who is part of a movement that claims the Holocaust never occurred.

In the letter to the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, seeking help in gathering evidence supporting Demjanjuk's claim of innocence, Brentar wrote that "a friend, Dr. Gerhard Frey," had referred him to the institute.

Frey is a leader of the neo-Nazi DVU, the German People's Union, which claims that the Holocaust never happened.

ties and misstatements.

In a June 1984 letter on the same stationery, Brentar sought assistance for Demjanjuk from Hubert Pfoch, a deputy mayor of Vienna, saying that

"we have succeeded in proving that the Soviet identity paper is a forgery and that, to a certain extent, the witnesses also lied, but all this is very difficult because the Jews here are comparable to the KGB in the Soviet Union."

But Brentar had chosen the wrong man for his plea. In a response later that month, Pfoch wrote that while approaching the Russian front as a member of the German Army, the Wehrmacht, he personally had "witnessed transports of Jews en route to Treblinka, who were exposed to atrocities that are hard to describe."

On Feb. 19, 1987, as Demjanjuk's trial got under way in Israel, his hometown newspaper, the Parma (Ohio) Sun Post, quoted Brentar as saying:

"If anything happens to this man, this is all going to come out and the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of the Jewish people are all going to suffer for this great injustice that has happened to this man."

"To be frank with you," Brentar told the newspaper, "I've been looking most of the airline bills for the attorneys and trips to gather evidence."

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davidleepreston2001

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