

# OSI targets more innocent people

by Scott Thompson

The U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI, better known as the Office of Special Inquisitions) has launched a last-ditch effort to salvage its track record as the government's ace Nazi hunters by carrying out a shameless extortion and blackmail campaign against hundreds of naturalized American citizens, according to sources close to a number of these cases.

OSI suffered a major setback several years ago when the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the conviction, instigated by the OSI, of retired Cleveland, Ohio auto worker John Demjanjuk on charges that he was the concentration camp guard "Ivan the Terrible," and allowed Demjanjuk to return to the United States. The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals followed up the Israeli Supreme Court ruling with its own finding that the OSI had committed fraud upon the court in its handling of the Demjanjuk case.

The OSI has now begun a campaign against about 600 minor figures in World War II who are still alive, including several *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans living in eastern Europe) who had been dragooned into the Waffen SS and were forced at pain of death to be perimeter guards at concentration camps. OSI officials are reportedly threatening these people with prosecution and deportation unless they agree to sign an admission of guilt—in return for which the OSI agrees not to pursue deportation. For the majority of these targets, now in their late 70s and 80s, the prospect of battling against the U.S. Department of Justice is out of the question. And so, the OSI is amassing a string of "victories" aimed at fending off a growing chorus of critics charging that the entire Nazi-hunting effort was so rife with corruption and hidden agendas that it was a major national embarrassment.

## Justice denied

In a recent letter to Elizabeth Holtzman, who was instrumental, with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in establishing the OSI, William Nezowy, president of the American Ukrainian Political Action Council of the U.S., reviewed how justice had been denied by the OSI in one show trial case after another:

"You probably feel like a proud mother for giving birth to the OSI through your amendment to the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] Act. . . . You've tried to impress your constituents and Congress of your womanly, maternal

warmth toward humankind. Yet in 1979, with your colleague from Philadelphia, Joshua Eilberg, you both concocted a law to negate the most valuable document in the world, 'The U.S. Constitution.'

"Your law, 'The Holtzman Amendment,' is out to get septuagenarians, who supposedly were working in concentration camps, under the Nazi occupation of eastern European nations. Ms. Holtzman, has it ever occurred to you, that the selected victims of the OSI had no choice under the 'Gestapo,' or have you considered being a guard at this horrendous time, did not mean that these people were murderers. . . .

"For example, **Frank Walus**, a native of Poland, was one of OSI's first victims. He was the only one telling the truth, while 11 Israeli witnesses committed perjury. The presiding judge, Julius Hoffman, denaturalized Walus. Later it was proven that Walus did in fact state the truth and was reinstated with his U.S. citizenship. . . .

"We cannot forget **Karl Linnas**, an Estonian native who was deported to the U.S.S.R., and seeing your sadistic pleasure being revealed while Aeroflot flew him to Leningrad, where he died in a hospital, for being a traitor to a regime which occupied his native land and murdered his kin. OSI accused him of being a camp commander. If you have any human compassion or common sense, you would realize that the Nazi government would not and never did permit a foreigner to be in charge of a Nazi camp. This man would never have been killed if it wasn't for your machinations, sneaky methods and the way your bill was put into law. We hope you realize that this man's blood is on your hands. . . .

"Another case on hand is victim [**Andrja Artukovic**, a Croatian native. Artukovic suffered from Alzheimer's disease and sclerosis of the brain, and didn't know what time of day it was and had to be fed. OSI, with armed Federal Marshals, broke into his home, backed up with a hovering Coast Guard helicopter and two ambulances waiting to take him away. He was deported to Yugoslavia where he died in prison. . . .

"The point here is, that none of the aforementioned victims were ever proven to have physically abused any person."

## Hundreds of innocents targeted

According to Nezowy, the OSI, recognizing that most potential targets are dead or dying of old age, has launched a new campaign targeting 600 people, largely of German extraction, who were forced under threat of death to join the Waffen SS at a time when its ranks were depleted by war. Two among these hundreds are the baker **Nikolaus Schiffer** and **Hans Breyer**. Briefly, a review of their cases show that they were victims of the Nazis, not Nazi war criminals:

**Hans Breyer**. Breyer became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1957, and he has spent much of his leisure time since then singing in the United Singers of Philadelphia and the Franklinville Quartet Club. Almost 50 years after the end of World War II, the OSI charged that Breyer had entered false

information on his immigration papers. Breyer had been invited to enter the United States, after an initial rejection, because he was a skilled tool-and-die maker.

In 1943, Breyer was drafted at age 17, because he was of ethnic German ancestry, based on a farm in the remote mountains of Slovakia. He was forced against his own and his parents' will into the Waffen SS, which by that time had been broken into a hodge-podge force of 900,000, conscripted from everywhere. He was taken to Buchenwald where, after minimal training, he was made to stand perimeter guard 12 hours a day. When he criticized the commanding officer, he was threatened with prison. Breyer was himself a de facto prisoner of war, only he stood outside instead of inside the walls of the prison. After three months at Buchenwald, he was given leave in August 1944; he went home, whereupon his parents hid him until the family itself was expelled as Volksdeutsche in January 1945. Hans was next sent by the Germans to the Russian Front, where he had several narrow escapes with death. Eventually, he was captured and sent to a Russian POW camp, where many died from starvation. At six feet tall, Breyer weighed 98 pounds when he left the Russian camp nearly blind.

One of the further complications in the OSI's case is that Hans Breyer's mother is American-born. The OSI began a campaign to manipulate the Justice Department and the courts into deporting him anyway. The case has been re-

manded by a three-judge panel back to the INS.

**Nikolaus Schiffer.** Schiffer was born in Philadelphia on April 9, 1919 to Romanian parents of German extraction. One year after he was born, the family returned to Romania, where he grew up in the small town of Moravitz. After his father died, he worked as a baker.

In 1940, at age 21, he was inducted into the Romanian Army. In 1942, he was wounded near Stalingrad and returned to Romania for treatment. The next year he was conscripted into the shattered Waffen SS and, as a Volksdeutsche, he was assigned guard duty, which he did at four concentration camps, serving as a perimeter guard with the rank of private. In 1945, Schiffer was captured by American forces. He was sent to Dachau for interrogation and investigation of war crimes. In 1947, he was released as a civilian, and a German civilian court cleared him of wrongdoing. In 1953, after a period in Austria with his mother, he received papers to immigrate to the United States, where he has been a pastry chef ever since.

On Aug. 25, 1993, after a seven-day trial, a Federal District judge issued an order in a case brought by the OSI to revoke Schiffer's citizenship. After three years of investigation, the OSI could only claim that Schiffer had lied on his immigration papers, not that he had harmed anyone. As we go to press, Schiffer is scheduled to appear before a deportation judge.

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