

## U.S. Urged to Bar Frenchman for War Deeds

By DOREEN CARVAJAL

A former French Resistance fighter and a veteran Nazi hunter are urging that a wealthy French industrialist be barred from the United States because he wrote anti-Semitic propaganda during the Nazi occupation.

The Justice Department is reviewing the allegations against the industrialist, Andre Bettencourt, a French Senator and former Cabinet minister who recently resigned as deputy chairman of the cosmetics giant L'Oreal.

At a news conference yesterday in Manhattan, the Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld and a former Resistance fighter, Jean Frydman, said they were pressing their case in the United States because there was no legal mechanism in France for prosecuting Mr. Bettencourt for writing propaganda. The accusations against Mr. Bettencourt, who is 75, first surfaced in French newspapers 10 days ago.

Mr. Klarsfeld urged that the Justice Department bar Mr. Bettencourt from the United States by putting him on its watch list of suspected war criminals for having used propaganda "to incite."

"He's guilty of writing," Mr. Klarsfeld said at the news conference, which was held at the New York Palace Hotel.

Mr. Bettencourt admits that he wrote the articles when he was in his 20's, but said it was a mistake that he tried to rectify by joining the French Resistance. "I have repeatedly expressed my regrets concerning them in public and will always beg the Jewish community to forgive me for them," he said in an apology issued yesterday.

From 1940 to 1942, Mr. Bettencourt wrote more than 60 articles for *La Terre Francaise*, a newspaper that flourished with German financ-



John Sotomayor/The New York Times

Serge Klarsfeld, the Nazi hunter, outlined the allegations against Andre Bettencourt of France yesterday at a news conference in Manhattan.

### *Wartime anti-Semitic articles haunt a former L'Oreal executive.*

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In a special Easter issue in 1941, he described Jews as "hypocritical Pharisees" whose "race has been forever sullied by the blood of the righteous. They will be cursed."

In a Christmas issue that year, he wrote: "Jews thought they had won the game. They succeeded in laying hands on Jesus and crucifying him. Rubbing their hands, they cried out, 'Let his blood fall upon us and upon our children.' You know how it fell and still is falling. Prescriptions of the eternal book must be fulfilled."

The articles were discovered in October by Mr. Frydman and his brother, David, in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, or national library, in Paris. Mr. Frydman said they had searched for the articles before in other French libraries but were usually told that they were missing or unavailable.

"After these terrible findings in October, we knew we were talking about a Nazi collaborator who is a very powerful man in France," Mr. Frydman said, adding, "We are going to show him that there is no amnesty for the past."

Mr. Bettencourt was awarded the

Croix de Guerre and a Resistance medal after the war. He is also a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, considered one of France's highest honors.

Between 1954 and 1973 he served in a variety of Cabinet posts spanning the administrations of Pierre Mendes-France, de Gaulle and Georges Pompidou.

A spokesman for the United States Justice Department confirmed yesterday that it was investigating the allegations about Mr. Bettencourt's past but said that the inquiry was not complete. The French businessman has frequently visited the United States, but it could not immediately be learned yesterday whether he has a residence here.

With the help of the New York-based Jewish Action Alliance, Mr. Frydman and Mr. Klarsfeld have enlisted support from several local congressmen, as well as Gov. George Pataki and Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, for an inquiry by the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

In resigning from L'Oreal as a deputy chairman in December, Mr. Bettencourt cited his age. But French newspapers have reported that he stepped down because of publicity about his pro-Nazi past. Mr. Bettencourt's son-in-law, Jean-Pierre Meyers, who is Jewish, succeeded him as deputy chairman.

Mr. Bettencourt remains the chairman of Gesparal, the holding company that owns 53.7 percent of L'Oreal. The cosmetics company was formed by his father-in-law, Eugene Schueller.