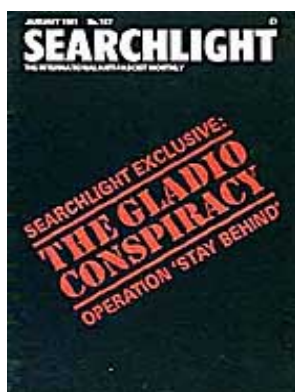


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GLADIO

Over the last few weeks an international team of *Searchlight* investigators has been working hard to build up an accurate picture of the significance of the revelations in Italy late last year of illicit operations by an organisation given the code name Gladio. This was the Italian section of a top secret NATO organisation that had its roots in the very earliest days of the cold war at the end of the second world war, even before NATO was created.

Clearly, while there existed a threat to the west, the people given the task of looking after our defence were entitled to look at all options, including a partisan or 'Stay Behind' policy. We do not question this. Our difference in opinion is over their choice of former and present nazis for the task and their decision to undermine democratic institutions in their own countries.

In Britain, for example, Operation Clockwork Orange, of which details have been revealed in the press in the last two years, was not confined to Ulster but was aimed at both moderate Conservative and Labour governments on the mainland.

Regular *Searchlight* readers will know that we have campaigned for the public release of information about operations like those of which the Italian Parliament has heard reports recently. The story of secret deals between Column 88 and Tory Action and sections of our intelligence service are nothing new and much of what has recently been exposed was known to us a long time ago. Are such deals the reason for so many almost inexplicable goings on over the last 20 years across western Europe including Britain?

Is this the reason for the continuing presence in Britain of convicted Italian terrorists like Roberto Fiore and Massimo Marsello? Not only, as we have previously revealed, were they working part-time for British intelligence, but they may well also have been part of the illegal mechanism operating for 20 years with such a devastating effect on Italian society.

Why is it that for several years, the exmilitary personnel who ran Column 88, the nazi underground paramilitary and intelligence cell system in Britain, were able to claim: "When the Russians come we have our allotted tasks to kill those who would co-operate with them", i.e. the enemy within, a phrase so popular during the last eleven and a half years?

Why have no serious charges ever been brought against senior members of Column 88 and why did Special Branch even deny that it had files on them when questions

were raised in the House of Commons in the mid-seventies? And how was Column 88 able to have free use of military equipment in its early days before we exposed it?

Maybe we should ask why convicted illicit arms dealers and sex offenders have been allowed to organise sections of Whitehall-backed 'Stay Behind'-type bodies?

Why for so many years was George Kennedy Young, former deputy head of MI6, able to bridge the gap between neonazis here and abroad, particularly in Italy, on the one hand, and the Italian intelligence service and anti-democratic elements in Britain's armed forces, parliament and the city, on the other?

We are not suggesting that every right-wing Conservative who got mixed up in Tory Action is an anti-democratic conspirator, only that Young and his close associates used organisations like Column 88 as a smoke screen for their more criminal plans.

Why was David Muire, another "former" intelligence officer, allowed to recruit and use paid-up members of Britain's most notorious nazi group, British Movement, to act as couriers in the eastern Mediterranean using false passports supplied by Muire?

The murder of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, the massacres of innocent shoppers in Belgian supermarkets, with a crude attempt to portray this barbarism as a left inspired action, and the wave of bombings over so many years in Italy, have all turned out in reality to have had one form or another of secret service involvement. Now it seems that all these crimes are connected with those who were involved in the 'Stay Behind' policies across Europe. The Stasi and KGB have had to come clean as the cold war dies away, but unfortunately questions that affect our own democratic way of life still demand full and honest answers.

OPERATION 'STAY BEHIND' - The Norse Connection

Nazis were the mainstay of NATO's secret 'Stay Behind' (or 'Gladlo', as it was known in Italy) programme in several European countries, a former NATO intelligence operative has claimed in a remarkable interview with a *Searchlight* journalist.

The interview, in which the source did not wish to be identified for reasons of his own safety, was conducted in December in the Netherlands.

In the interview, the ex-NATO man confirmed that former nazis in Sweden and West Germany, in particular, had "been recruited as part of the Stay Behind operation" in which secret army formations were built up across the whole of northern and western Europe to prepare to fight a Soviet invasion.

Until a scandal erupted in Italy over the investigation into the 1978 killing of Premier Aldo Moro, Stay Behind had remained one of the cold war's best-kept secrets.

"Right-wing extremists in Sweden were part of the Stay Behind set-up and I cannot understand why the Swedish authorities never took a closer look at one organisation". the former NATO man said.

He went on to name the organisation as Sveaborg, which was founded in 1941 by Otto Hallberg and is a shadowy and highly secretive group, mainly composed of veteran Swedish volunteer battalion members who fought in the Finnish-Soviet war, some of whom went on to join the Waffen-SS Nordland division.

Many of Sveaborg's members and those of the Swedish volunteer units in the Finnish-Russian war had been recruited from the war-time Swedish Socialist Society (SSS). which despite its name was nazi and was led by one of the country's most notorious Hitlerites, Sven Olov-Lindholm.

searchlight, in co-operation with journalists on the Swedish weekly magazine *Arbetaren*. have been able to confirm that the former NATO man's allegations about the Swedish Stay Behind operation are not mere speculation.

In particular. they were able to track down Lennart Hansson, an ageing former close associate of Otto Hallberg, who says that even before the end of the war Hallberg had begun to put together the nuts and bolts of an anti-communist resistance movement.

Hansson admitted that his movement first made base with officials at the US embassy in Stockholm in

1947-48 and that it was promised covert US assistance in the event of a Soviet attack.

"The name of the secret movement", he said, "was Sveaborg and the nucleus of the movement consisted of military personnel".

In the 1950s, Sveaborg had over 1,000 "contact persons" who were the core of the would-be guerrilla force. Many of these people were serving in the Swedish armed forces and the group held regular military exercises.

Both Hansson and the still living Svenolov Lindholm claim that the resistance movement was very much under Hallberg's personal direction and control and Hansson maintains that contacts with the US continued until about 1955.

In mid-November, the former head of the CIA, William Colby, who was stationed in Stockholm from 1951 to 1953, told the Swedish news agency, TI, that he had been engaged in establishing an armed anti-communist movement in Scandinavia.

Interestingly in 1953, soon after Colby left Stockholm, Otto Hallberg was seized by the Swedish authorities and accused of creating an "illegal military formation".

However, after a secret investigation, he was set free and the charges were mysteriously dropped. The files on the case were closed to public scrutiny.

Today Sveaborg keeps an extremely low profile but does exist and is said to have taken younger people into its ranks. Its only public activity takes place on 14 April each year when it gathers at a Stockholm cemetery to honour the Swedish nazi "hero", Gosta Hallberg-Cuula, who was killed in action on the Finnish front.

However, it is alleged that Sveaborg, which started its life as an elite arm of the SSS, has also secretly bankrolled activity by right-wing extremists in more recent times. Certainly it has always seen its role as fighting communism.

In her book *Hakkorset och Wasakarven*, published this year, Dr Helena Loow of Gothenburg University's Institute of History wrote that Sveaborg "considered itself to be a secret unit whose foremost task was to fight the enemy within and without".

The former NATO informant commented: "The choice of Sveaborg was a logical one for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) because elsewhere in Europe nazis were also being recruited as the most reliable anti-communists".

Though the Stay Behind operation was officially started only in 1952, "the whole exercise had been in existence for a long time, in fact, ever since it was born in the head of Allen Dulles", said the ex-NATO source who has had access to files in several West European nations.

According to him, Dulles, the first chief of the CIA, worked out the original plan to build secret anti-communist guerrilla forces across Europe when he was based in Switzerland at the end of the second world war.

"Dulles, Sir Stewart Menzies, boss of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and the Belgian Premier Paul-Henri Spaak codified the plan in a secret pact sometime between 1949 and 1952 under the umbrella of the Clandestine Co-ordinating Committee at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), which became NATO.

"There was a division of labour between the British and the US", he continued, "with Britain taking responsibility for the operation in France, Belgium, Holland, Portugal and Norway and the Americans

looking after Sweden, Finland and the rest of Europe".

In the light of this statement, it would appear that when Colby was talking about Scandinavia he was, in fact, talking about Sweden, since Norway was "British territory" and he was operating only in Sweden.

Ironically it was in Norway that the first hint of Stay Behind surfaced in 1978 when a police raid on ship-owner Hans Otto Mayer turned up a huge quantity of weapons, explosives and sophisticated communications equipment.

Mayer told the police investigators that he was the leader of a Stay Behind group and after a brief row when police made this public. the story was quickly buried.

Asked about the exact nature and purpose of Stay Behind. the NATO source explained that it was two-fold: "to destabilise any left-leaning government. even a Social Democratic one, and in the event of a Warsaw Pact attack to function as a guerrilla army using classical guerrilla tactics"

OPERATION 'STAY BEHIND' - One Dead Prime Minister

The emphasis varied from country to country. In Italy and France, which both had very strong Communist Parties, the objective was to thwart their influence by disruption from within and causing acts of terror which would increase popular demands for restrictive measures and benefit right-wing conservative parties

He alleged that in Italy British intelligence had assisted in the formation of (secret military units and had provided training in both Britain and Sardinia to which hundreds of men had been flown in blacked-out planes. The strength of the Italian Stay Behind group was put at about 12,000 men.

So far the existence of the plan has officially admitted in Holland Luxembourg, France, Switzerland Greece, Germany, Turkey and Italy where the story first hit the headlines and caused a massive political scandal as part of the investigation into the terrorist murder of Aldo Moro.

According to our source, Moro was sacrificed because he defied a US veto on appointing communists to his government The murder was carried out by the Red Brigade, which had been heavily penetrated by agents of the Italian security services.

"There were other activities as well and there were Stay Behind people implicated in the fascist bomb attack on Bolobna railway station in 1980". In that attack, 85 people were killed and hundreds injured.

Last summer one of the men jailed for his part in the Bologna mass murder - Licio Gelli, the grandmaster of the P2 masonic lodge - was released after a sucessful appeal against his conviction.

In the interview the ex-NATO operative said that Ted Shackley, the CIA's deputy station chief in Rome, "fixed a meeting between Alexander Haig and Gelli at the US embassy in Rome in the early 1970s, when Haig was President Nixon's chief of staff".

"Money", he said, "was then filtered to Stay Behind or Gladio as it was called in Italy with the blessing and knowledge of both Haig and the then head of the US National Security Council, Henry Kissinger. Their aim was to prevent a communist takeover at all costs.

"This did not come cheap. To my knowledge, the CIA alone spent over \$100 million on Stay Behind in Europe and this was quite separate from other funds coming out of Washington.

"There were, and still are arms dumps all over Europe", he said, "and as many as 900 of these remain intact". It was confirmed in Rome on 20 November that explosives from one such secret arsenal at Aurisina in Italy went missing in late 1971 just before a fascist car-bomb attack killed three policemen at Peteano.

Turning to Germany, the ex-intelligence man had further dramatic revelations. He avowed that the US Office of Policy Co-ordination, which fronted for the CIA, had "incorporated lock, stock and barrel the espionage outfit run by Hitler's spy chief Reinhard Gehlen

"This is well known", he commented, "because Gehlen was the spiritual father of Stay Behind in Germany and his role was known to the West German leader, Konrad

Adenauer, from the outset. Adenauer signed a secret protocol with the US on West Germany's entry into NATO in May 1955 in which it was agreed that the West German authorities would refrain from active legal pursuit of known right-wing extremists.

"What is not so well-known", he went on, "is that other top German politicians were privy to the existence of secret resistance plans. One of these was the then German State Secretary and former high-ranking nazi, Hans Globke".

Elaborating on this, our source said that the operation drew its main personnel from former SS and Waffen SS men during the early post-war years and that these were trained by officers of the British SIS. Later the operation was taken over by a secret wing of the Federal German Intelligence Service, the BND.

Some of the objectives of the German Stay Behind conspiracy were highlighted in a German Stern TV programme last month in which it was reported that the assassination of left-wing politicians was planned by the German wing of Stay Behind in the event of a Soviet invasion.

High on the death list were two top Social Democrats, Herbert Wehner, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party in the West German Parliament, and the former Mayor of Bremen, Wilhelm Kaisen.

"Amongst those who were recruited and did some recruiting for the scheme in the first years were an ex-SS Obersturmführer, Hans Otto, and other smaller fish. But the prize catch was Klaus Barbie who functioned as a recruiter for ex-nazis and members of the fascist Bund Deutscher Jugend".

Documentary evidence in the hands of the British All-Party Parliamentary War Crimes Group, established in 1986 to bring nazi fugitives in Britain to justice, shows that Barbie, now in a French jail for crimes against humanity during his war-time reign of terror as Gestapo chief in Lyons, was indeed in close contact with the US secret services.

However so far there has been no documentary evidence to confirm this particular allegation and such evidence on the whole subject of Stay Behind is in any case in short supply.

Our source provided his own explanation for this: "If there was one lesson learned from Watergate it was to leave nothing on paper and to destroy anything that had been recorded".

And the history of some of Barbie's postwar activities continues to remain firmly under wraps.

Will death keep their secrets?

How strange it is that so many of the key players in the conspiracies around Gladio in Italy and its counterparts elsewhere are now dead.

There was the untimely death of Airy Neave at the beginning of the Thatcher decade. Also dead are former

intelligence officer David Muire and David Stirling who has been mentioned in connection with the Stay Behind policy in Britain and Europe. George K. Young, the eminence grise of the plotters in this country, has passed away. And the most recent death was that of General Vito Micelli. His obituary just before Christmas in *The Telegraph* tells us so much about the type of people these plotters were.

OPERATION'STAY BEHIND' - UK: Soldiers' Tale

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher backed top-secret plans to modernise armed cells that could carry out actions abroad.

This allegation highlights the undoubted fact that the secret networks of the kind proposed under NATO's Stay Behind plans carried on their activities right into the 1980s.

In particular, it is alleged as has long been suspected by *Searchlight* that the persons involved in the secret armed cells conspiracy included George Kennedy Young, the ex-deputy director of the British intelligence service MI6, and others who had launched Thatcher's campaign for leadership in the mid-1970s. One of these was Airey Neave MP, a top and very close adviser to Thatcher, later murdered by the IRA.

Ex-spy-master Young, a notorious racist and antisemite who died last year, was for many years a key link man between the extreme-right of the Conservative Party and some of Britain's most dangerous and violent neo-nazis.

The vehicle for this liaison, which included contact with individuals connected with the underground fascist elite paramilitary organisation, Column 88, was his own pressure group called Tory Action. David Muire, another former intelligence officer, was using British Movement members as couriers for British Intelligence.

Tory Action, founded by Young and supported by Neave, was also at the centre of a smear campaign, involving the secret services, aimed at discrediting the then Labour Government in Britain in 1975.

Just before the 1979 general election, which brought Thatcher to power, Young and Neave were plotting to use a disinformation campaign against Labour.

In 1987 a former MI6 officer, Leigh Tracey, revealed that Neave had approached him to join a small, highly select group to organise an army of resistance in case Labour won the election.

Seen in the context of Stay Behind, the anti-democratic manoeuvrings of Young and Neave and their connection with efforts to build so-called private armies take on a deeper meaning.

According to *The Guardian*, the secret armed cells plan existed before Thatcher took office in 1979 and continued until the French secret service attack on a Greenpeace ship in New Zealand in 1985 led to its abandonment.

So far the British Ministry of Defence has remained tightlipped on the whole subject of the terrorist Stay Behind networks, but two former British army generals have confirmed that such plans were operative in Britain.

One of them, Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley, the former NATO commander of Allied Forces Northern Europe, has admitted that a secret armed network of selected civilians was set up in Britain after the war.

Searchlight has not been able to confirm allegations that later, in the 1970s, General Sir Walter Walker's private army, UNISON, which was closely linked with senior serving and retired British forces chiefs, was

part of the clandestine network.

However, it is now clear that the elite Special Air Services regiment (SAS) was up to its neck in the NATO scheme and functioned, with MI6, as a training arm for guerrilla warfare and sabotage.

This, according to the testimony of Italian General Gerardo Serravalle, went on until the early 1970s when, he said, an Italian Stay Behind unit had trained in Britain. The evidence now suggests that it lasted well into the 1980s.

British Stay Behind activity was by no means confined to the United Kingdom, however, and it has been proved that the SAS constructed the secret hides where arms were stockpiled in the British sector of West Germany.

Also of far more significance than previously thought are the relations between the British and US intelligence services and the former nazi Gestapo chief in Lyon, France, Klaus Barbie.

Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon", now serving a life sentence for his part in nazi genocide during the war-time German occupation of France, was helped by the US secret service Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) to escape to Argentina in 1951.

In 1985 British Foreign Office Minister Baroness Young wrote to fellow Conservative MP Sir Gerard Vaughan to tell him that official papers relating to Barbie could not be released "because of their sensitive nature".

Searchlight has CIC documents, previously labelled "Top Secret", that refer to the British and US "Operation Selection Board", which detailed plans to identify and apprehend "certain elements of the SS".

The CIC was willing, according to the documents, to use him on condition that he severed connections with the British part of "Operation Selection Board" and with what the documents curiously describe as "illegal SS elements" (all "SS elements" were at that time supposedly illegal).

Barbie worked for CIC until his activity became embarrassing for the US, which knew that he was top of the French intelligence service's wanted list and which had gone to extraordinary lengths to protect him. The Americans wanted to hide his very close links with them at all costs from the British as well.

Significantly, Barbie's decision to break off his contacts with British intelligence came after a discussion with another former nazi named as a Stay Behind personality, the ex-Waffen SS officer Hans Otto. Part of Barbie's function was to penetrate French intelligence networks which were believed by the CIC to be communist-infiltrated.

The US documents make no mention of any post-war resistance plans, but seen in the light of the fact that these plans had the maximum classification of secrecy and that the US was desperate to use Barbie, their significance becomes much clearer. They also confirm Barbie's connection with early post-war right-extremist outfits like the Bund Deutscher Jugend, ex-SS and Waffen-SS men and Hans Otto.

The claim by a former NATO intelligence officer that Barbie was also a Stay Behind recruiter goes some way to explain yawning gaps in information about his activities between 1948 and 1950, when he was finally ditched by the US in a bid to get rid of him without losing the confidence of other ex-nazis who were still working for them.

It certainly helps explain one other thing. By 1985 it was widely believed that everything that could be known about Barbie's post-war odyssey was known even if he himself had revealed virtually nothing.

However, if he had indeed been involve in a NATO operation that was still in existence in 1989, then there was every reason that British secret papers relating to him would remain of "a sensitive nature".

Clearly the British government and its secret services, like their US counterparts, still have much to hide.

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