

Luxembourg trial into 1980s terror bombings reveals involvement of German police, intelligence agents

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A trial is taking place in Luxembourg dealing with a series of terror bombings committed in the 1980s. Although the bombings implicate NATO troops and its top secret Stay Behind operation in terrorist activities, the trial has been largely ignored by the German and international media.

At the centre of the trial are two members of the Brigade mobile de la Gendarmerie (BMG), an elite police unit, accused of being responsible for 18 bombings that rocked Luxembourg between May 1984 and April 1986. Josh Wilmes and Marco Scheer are alleged to have carried out the bombings with two other now-deceased colleagues. The alleged aim of the bombings was to achieve increased funding for law enforcement.

The 9th Criminal Court in Luxembourg has been sitting in the so-called Bommeleëër process (Bomb planting trial) for 44 days, with no end of the trial in sight. While the prosecution has sought to prove that the two elite policemen were behind the attacks, the defence has argued that those responsible were members of the NATO-led Stay Behind network.

The involvement of NATO in the bombings is underlined by the fact that the Stay Behind operation—this time under the name Gladio—was responsible for very similar terrorist attacks in Italy at the beginning of the 1980s. The aim of those attacks was to destabilise Italy and create the conditions for a political shift to the right.

It has been established in court that the attack on the main train station in Bologna on August 2, 1980, which left 85 dead, was carried out by neo-fascist extremists belonging to the Armati Rivoluzionari Nuclei (NAR), which had links to Gladio. At the time of the Bologna bombing, the media and politicians claimed that the country's so-called Red Brigades were responsible.

Unlike in Italy, there were no fatalities resulting from the bombings in Luxembourg, but on a number of occasions it was pure chance that no one was killed. The bombs were laid at electricity substations, police stations, the Palace of Justice, a lawyer's office, the airport, a swimming pool, a gas station and a newspaper office.

Striking at the time was the familiarity on the part of the

perpetrators with local security measures. Some of the attacks made downright fun of the investigating authorities. The power company Cegedel, whose power substations were the targets of attacks, received several notes demanding ransom money. The perpetrators, however, appeared to have no real interest in any transfer of funds, but were able to accurately describe attempts to trap them in the course of a handover. It was this precise knowledge that led investigators to conclude that the bombings were an inside job.

Even more remarkable is the fact that the perpetrators were never caught despite a plethora of clues and statements by witnesses. According to state attorney Robert Biever, no fewer than 88 from a total of 125 pieces of evidence disappeared in the course of the investigation of the two accused. It is presumed that the perpetrators were being covered by elements within the security apparatus.

Suspicions that the NATO Stay Behind network was involved in the attacks had already emerged at an earlier date. The organisation had been established after World War II to carry out secret missions, including acts of sabotage and assassination in the event of a Soviet invasion. The recruits for the elite force were invariably right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis. Under the protective umbrella of the American and German intelligence agencies the so-called Butcher of Lyon, Klaus Barbie, established the ultra-right Federation of German Youth (BDJ), a precursor to the Stay Behind organisation.

Amongst the evidence presented by defence lawyers is the recording of a secret conversation carried out in 2006 between the long-standing Luxembourg prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, his justice minister, Luc Frieden, the head of the Luxembourg intelligence service SREL (Service de Renseignements en l'État), Marco Mille, and his employees, André Kemmer and Frank Schneider. In the conversation, the participants speculate about the possible involvement of Stay Behind in the bombings. Juncker is due to appear in the trial as a witness.

The conversation also discussed the presence of Licio Gelli in Luxembourg in the period during which the bombings took place. Gelli was the head of the P2 lodge (Propaganda Due) in

Italy, which included in its ranks hundreds of leading figures from politics, the military, business, media and mafia circles (including, notably, Silvio Berlusconi). The lodge had close links to Gladio and sought to create conditions for a coup based on terrorist attacks and a “strategy of tension”.

The involvement of Stay Behind in Luxembourg has already been confirmed by a witness from Germany. In an affidavit dated March 13, the German historian Andreas Kramer confirmed that his father, John Kramer, was an officer in the German Intelligence Service (BND) and coordinated the Stay Behind networks in Germany, Switzerland and the Benelux countries.

According to Andreas Kramer, his father was not only responsible for the bombings in Luxembourg, but also for the bomb attack on the Munich Oktoberfest in 1980 that killed 13 people and injured 113. John Kramer is alleged to have contributed to the construction of the bomb.

Based on Kramer’s affidavit, the court in Luxembourg ordered a DNA test in order to check whether John Kramer had penned the blackmail letters to the Cegedel utility company. According to his son, the BND agent Kramer, now deceased, wrote the letters.

The German media and his own family have denounced Andreas Kramer as a liar, but there are experts who regard his testimony as entirely plausible. In any event, it is clear that a branch of the Stay Behind organisation was active in Germany.

US intelligence agencies set up the organisation that called itself the “Technical Service” of the Federation of German Youth (BDJ), after the war, employing former Nazis. Official opposition from the Social Democratic Party (SPD) first came when a list was revealed of Germans to be liquidated in the event of an invasion by the Red Army. A number of SPD members were on the list. As a result of the scandal, the organisation was “legalised” by being officially integrated into NATO structures in the early 1950s.

In May of this year, a spokesman for the German government admitted that the German branch of Stay Behind had been integrated into the BND in 1955. It employed up to 500 agents before allegedly being dissolved in the autumn of 1991. The government also admitted that the leading BND man in the operation was “very likely” John Kramer. No details have been released, however, about his activities.

In 1990, Manfred Schüler, who worked closely with SPD chancellor Helmut Schmidt between 1974 and 1980, told *Der Spiegel* that the BND had informed the German government orally about the activities of its secret force. Funding for the operations of Stay Behind had been approved by the Trust Board of the Bundestag up until the early 1990s. The chairman of this committee, Rudi Walther (SPD), acknowledged that “money had always been granted” to Stay Behind.

Since then, a number of authors have uncovered clues pointing to a possible involvement of the German government or its Stay Behind organisation in the Oktoberfest bombing.

Immediately after the bombing, the official version claimed the atrocity had been carried out by a “lone assassin”, Gundolf Köhler, a man with no political background. It is now known, however, that Köhler had close contacts with the neo-Nazi paramilitary group Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann.

In October 2011, *Der Spiegel* reported that Köhler was “firmly rooted in a milieu of militant neo-Nazis,” which “in turn cultivated close contact with some CSU officials.” The Christian Social Union is currently one of the partners in the ruling government coalition.

Based on research into previously unreleased secret documents, *Der Spiegel* concluded that the aim of the Oktoberfest bombing, as was the case in Bologna, was to initiate a political swing to the right. Köhler had declared that “responsibility for the bombing could be accorded to the left” and intimidate voters to support the right-wing CSU candidate in the imminent general election.

In the summer of 2009, Green Party MP Jerzy Montag submitted a comprehensive questionnaire on Gladio and the Oktoberfest bombing. This in turn provides a link to the Nazi NSU terror group, which is currently on trial in Munich. In the homes of the NSU suspects, investigators found a “hit list” with the names of potential targets. Among the names was Jerzy Montag.

According to Andreas Kramer, “Gladio is still active to this day and often works with extreme right-wing circles”. If he is able to substantiate his claims with “secret intelligence evidence”, as he claims, this would play a role in the ongoing NSU trial in Munich, where the court, prosecution and defence team of NSU member Beate Zschäpe are deliberately seeking to play down the role of the German intelligence agencies in the 10 murders committed by the terror gang.



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