
France

Klaus Barbie verdict vindicates Resistance

by Philip S. Golub

In the early hours of July 3, Nazi Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie was condemned to life imprisonment for wartime crimes against humanity, including the mass deportations of Jewish children to the concentration camps, by the jurors hearing the case in the Appeals Court of Lyon, France. While this dénouement was widely expected, the conduct of defense lawyer Jacques "Mansour" Vergès had raised doubts in the early phases of the trial, doubts which were dispelled by the unanimous verdict of the jury.

Vergès's repeated threats to disgrace the French Resistance in late May and June revealed themselves as empty diatribes. Had Vergès, who has never refrained from outrageous denunciation, had access to any compromising material, he would have made it public then and there. He did not.

Instead, he and his associated Algerian and Congolese lawyers limited themselves to irrelevant—and pathetic—comparisons designed to relatively diminish the Nazi crimes. While France, Israel, and the United States were successively cited in this regard, Vergès and his associates failed to mention the crimes of governments close to their ideological persuasion—the Soviet Union in Afghanistan for example, or the unspeakable genocide of nearly half of the Khmer people at the hands of Pol Pot, an old acquaintance of Vergès.

Needed: trial for drug trafficking

Attorney Vergès's client, twice condemned to death in absentia in the 1950s for war crimes whose statute of limitations has now passed, had never altered his "convictions," becoming a top drug dealer in Bolivia, where he continued the killing business.

This side of Barbie's postwar activity deserves greater scrutiny than it has received. It is a microcosm of the international drug networks, combining elements of the Nazi International (it is no accident that Colombian cocaine kingpin Carlos Lehder is an avowed admirer of Adolf Hitler), the mafia and, since 1967, the intelligence services of the Warsaw Pact countries, including the Cuban DGI. In that sense,

Barbie deserves a new trial—for narcotics trafficking.

Jacques Vergès is himself a case study in the Nazi-communist alliance. A longstanding associate of Swiss Nazi banker François Genoud, who has intelligence ties to both the East German State Security Service and to the Iranian secret service, the Savama, Vergès joined Genoud in defending Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine assassins at Winterthur in 1969. The two are said to have met long before, during the Algerian War, when Vergès was a militant Communist fighting alongside the Algerian National Liberation Front, while Genoud was their banker.

More recently, Genoud was said to have been behind the fake "Hitler Diaries" that surfaced in *Stern* magazine.

Communist effort to exploit case

For France the outcome of the trial has had great importance: The French anti-Nazi Resistance, after years of disinformation, insinuation, and slander from both communist and fascist circles, emerged unscathed, indeed victorious.

From 1945 on, the Communist Party of France, the Soviet propaganda and disinformation machine, and some of their fellow-travelers, have ruthlessly sought to rewrite the history of the Resistance and the war, oftentimes using ex-Nazis converted to a new totalitarian cause to accredit their case.

Erased from memory and books are the dark years of toleration of the Nazi presence in France by the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party during the Hitler-Stalin Pact or the covert operations run by networks of the NKVD (the Soviet secret police under Stalin) against the non-Communist Resistance during the entire war. It is necessary to recall Gen. Charles de Gaulle's bitter and finally successful struggle to avoid an armed Communist seizure of power in France at the end of the war to understand the political importance of the debate.

The non-Communist Resistance became the backbone and the primary force of the Gaullist state in the postwar period. The insinuations, slanders, and attacks against it were and are, therefore, attacks against the very institutions of France.

NKVD treason and the Moulin case

This is the contemporary issue of the trial of Klaus Barbie and the background to the unanswered questions still hovering over the case of de Gaulle's special envoy, Jean Moulin, sent to France in 1943 to unify the Resistance movements of the interior, who was captured, tortured, and killed by Klaus Barbie. While it is firmly established that his capture at Caluire and subsequent death resulted from treason, the source of the treason has never fully been established. For decades, the Communists have argued that the betrayal was run by Resistance organizations affiliated with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS). In reality, unpublished evidence points to the NKVD, and not the OSS or the Gaullists as the Communists claim.

Evidence was provided by an ex-Communist Resistance fighter and historian who left the party in disgust after the war, Guy Serbat, of Soviet wartime intelligence betrayal of both non-Communist and some Communist Resistance organizations.

Serbat, citing the case of NKVD double agent Lucien Iltis, who infiltrated the Gestapo in Lyon and proceeded to betray Resistance networks to them and who, at the war's end, sought to infiltrate the newly reconstituted French intelligence services, provided a crucial indication during his testimony that NKVD double-cross operations had much to do with the Moulin case. Moulin, who, contrary to Communist Party claims was not a Communist sympathizer, was sent in by de Gaulle precisely to put a leash on the Communists prior to the great Allied offensives of 1944. Serbat himself, in an interview with the daily *Libération*, hinted that much of the NKVD activities against the Resistance has yet to be made public.

Serbat's testimony added special weight to the testimony of Jacques Chaban-Delmas, president of the National Assembly and leader of the Resistance, and of Mme. Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, president of the Action Committee for the Resistance (CAR), who both argued that enemy infiltration, and in some cases the breakdown of individuals under torture—how could it be otherwise?—were the sources of the few, though highly damaging, cases of treason in the Resistance. Mme. Fourcade cited in particular the case of Nazi infiltration of Resistance intelligence organizations to explain cases of this nature.

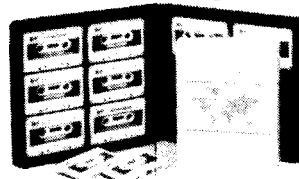
Historians and intelligence experts in France point out that the strident declarations of ex-French intelligence head Alexandre de Marenches last year, pointing to an allegedly extremely compromising 10 tons of Abwehr and Gestapo documents captured by the French in 1945, were groundless. All of the key individuals who have seen these documents and papers, including all heads of French intelligence prior to de Marenches, have contradicted him. The files that were "useful" were used in the immediate postwar period and kept; the rest, the so-called 10 tons, were the daily mill of Nazi activities and nothing close to what de Marenches claimed.

More should have come out

Unquestionably, more could have been said at the trial. The important testimony of historian Guy Serbat should have been expanded, bringing to the surface the role of Stalin's NKVD; the constraints imposed by the court on the contents of testimony were too restrictive in the view of most prosecution witnesses.

The international press failed to cover one of the strongest statements of the entire trial, in which Mrs. Fourcade stressed that the Resistance was not testifying in a spirit of hate, but rather with recognition of the existence of the German resistance in mind. This plea for a common struggle against totalitarianism should have been better heard.

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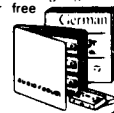
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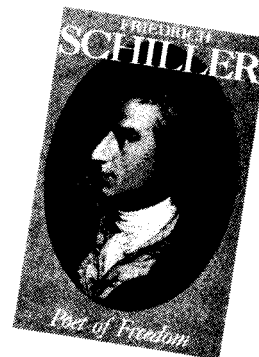
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