

Justice or Political Use

by Michael Curtis



Stanisław Chrzanowski

In the puzzling and intriguing film, *The Green Knight*, the knight Sir Gawain defends his mission which is likely to end in his death, telling his girlfriend that undertaking suicide missions are how brave men become great. “Why greatness? Isn’t goodness not enough?” she replies. The ethical issue is raised. Should virtue be valued in terms of public acclamation, or in terms of private morality?

In a much broader ethical, as well as political question, the issue is and was whether Nazi officials and collaborators should escape punishment for their crimes and be employed in and find a safe haven in the U.S. and UK because of their supposed value to Western security agencies in confronting the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Simply put, should perpetrators of evil not only go unpunished but also be treated as respectable and rewarded by their usefulness to the CIA or MI6? Equally serious is the fact that complicity with those perpetrators, and allowing elderly Nazis to live in the U.S. and UK and escape justice, may indicate a defiance of international agreement, as well as regarding the Holocaust as inconsequential.

During World War II, two Declarations, that of St. James’ Palace on June 2, 1941, and the subsequent one of the UN on January 13, 1942, the first joint statements of goals and principles by the 14 Allied Powers in the War, laid down that the punishment of those responsible for Nazi crimes was among the first war aims. Even before details of the Holocaust were known, Winston Churchill stated, “Resolution for these crimes must henceforward take its place among the major purposes of

the war." In contrast, U.S. officials overlooked or ignored the crimes and shielded Nazi war criminals in their pursuit of an anti-Communist crusade. Did that pursuit and its pivotal place in American foreign policy during the Cold War justify the tolerance and even support of human rights abusers and those involved in crimes against humanity and their escape from justice?

The release of troves of documents of the CIA and MI6 confirm that they allowed the evil perpetrators to escape punishment for their crimes, and used an extensive neo-Nazi network to wage a post war campaign against the Soviet Union. Similarly, in post war France the evils of the Vichy regime have often been ignored or excused. It is not true that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. The reality is that Nazi criminals received light punishment, no punishment at all, and even received compensation because Western spy agencies considered them useful assets in the Cold War.

Judgement on all this continues. In Britain in September 2021, there are calls for a public inquiry into whether alleged Nazi war criminals were protected from prosecution because they acted as spies or were useful for the UK during the Cold War. The calls came after a BBC program found that a suspected Nazi collaborator named Stanislaw Chrzanowski , SC, probably worked for MI6. He grew up in eastern Poland, now part of Belarus, came to Britain in 1946 after being a prisoner of war, and joined Allied forces.

This Pole, SC, who died in 2017 aged 96 was involved in Nazi atrocities, including mass murder of at least 30 people, against Jews and others in his home town of Slonim. Fluent in three languages, Polish, Russian, and German, he worked after the war in a refugee camp in West Berlin that housed people fleeing from Communism. MI6 must have known he was a murderer, a Nazi collaborator yet used him. One problem in finding the truth is that British security agencies destroyed at least 110,00 files in the late 1980s and early 1990s of any

foreign born Nazi collaborator who worked for UK intelligence, therefore British police did not have sufficient evidence to bring charges against SC. Nevertheless, it is clear not only that many Nazi suspects were safe in Britain after the war, but that British intelligence facilitated this and protected them from prosecution.

In similar fashion, in the U.S., declassified files of CIA confirm the use of Nazis, allowing senior Nazi scientists and political personnel to enter or work in the U.S. and in Europe because they were considered useful in the Cold War. These evil persons include associates of Adolf Eichmann. Just two examples: Emil Augsburg, SS, who worked at the Wannsee Institute, the body that planned the Final Solution, was employed as a Soviet expert by the CIA in the late 1940s; and Otto von Bolschwing, SD, adjutant to Eichmann, who was relocated to NYC and protected. The CIA decided the latter's Nazi past was "relatively inconsequential, partially in view of his excellent service on our behalf."

The list is long. Between 1945 and 1955, 765 German scientists, engineers, technicians, entered the U.S. At least half and perhaps 80% were former Nazi members. Probably the best know is Werner von Braun , leader in rocket technology in Germany, and largely responsible for rocketry in the U.S. space program and the moon landing. But he was in charge of 20, 000 prisoners on the Nazi rocket project. Also employed by the U.S. were Arthur Rudolph , assistant von Braun at the V-2 project , who used slave labor in the project's underground factory in Nordhausen; and Hubertus Strughold, controller of clinic in Germany which conducted experiments on children and prisoners, worked with U.S. air force on space medicine.

Evidence from Operation Paperclip, a secret U.S. intelligence program, indicates 1600 cases of German scientists, engineers, and technicians, who were employed by the U.S., largely by U.S. counter-intelligence agencies.

A pivotal figure in U.S. policy was Allen Dulles, first civilian and longest serving director of CIA, who believed "we should be free to talk to the Devil himself." Dulles as a pre-war Wall Street lawyer and diplomat represented German firms, including Thyssen and I.G. Farben. He became head of the operations of OSS, the Office of Strategic Services in Switzerland. In that capacity he helped German bankers and industrialists, as well as senior Nazi officials, who had been involved in Nazi programs escape prosecution. As head of the CIA, he shielded major Nazis. One of most notorious protected was General Karl Wolff, Heinrich Himmler's Chief of Staff, active in approving deadly medical experiments performed on inmates at Dachau concentration and death camp, a crime against humanity, and responsible for deporting 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka death camp.

Among others that Allen Dulles protected or used was Mykola Lebed, head of the secret police organization of Ukrainian Nationalists who was convicted in 1936 of complicity in the 1934 assassination of a Polish minister and who was trained by the Gestapo. According to Dulles, in a letter of May 5, 1952 to immigration authorities, Lebed was of "inestimable value" to the CIA in its operations to develop the Ukrainian underground movement. Lebed, reported as "a well-known sadist and collaborator of the Germans" with the help of Dulles acquired permanent residence in New York and U.S. citizenship.

Like Allen Dulles , the fellow Princetonian George Kennan at the State Department protected some Germans. On October 19, 1948, Kennan wrote to Frank Wisner at the CIA praising Gustav Hilger, who had been used by the CIA, and who had been chief interpreter for Joachim von Ribbentrop and chief advisor on Soviet Affairs and worked for the Gehlen organization.

General Reinhard Gehlen was responsible for German military-intelligence operations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He approached the U.S. as an anti-Soviet asset, and

fighter of communism. During the Cold War he enlisted former Nazis and others , including Alois Brunner, chief deputy of Eichmann, Emil Augsburg, and the notorious Klaus Barbie, the "butcher of Lyon," aided by American army sponsorship. The Gehlen organization played a role in NATO and on U.S. policy on the U.S., sometimes exaggerating the Soviet threat. Gehlen was a master of disinformation and claimed he was never a Nazi but essentially an anti-communist.

Yet, what he did do was help Nazis escape abroad where they emerged as security advisors, especially Barbie who became an adviser of military regimes in Bolivia.

There are at least three problems in assessing attitudes to the use of Nazis or alleged Nazis; many records are classified for security reasons; many of the war criminals were neither German by birth nor Nazi party members; many of them peddled false data, playing a double game, which took time to penetrate. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to choose between Winston Churchill and Allen Dulles on the issue of acknowledgment of and punishment for evil crimes or supposed political benefit.