

The Central Intelligence Agency and the Stay-Behind Networks in West Germany: An Assessment

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Abstract

In the early Cold War, fearing a possible Soviet invasion and occupation of Western Europe, U.S. intelligence decided to establish stay-behind networks that would activate only after the Russian assault. Many dormant cells were thus established in West Germany by different branches of the Central Intelligence Agency during the period 1948-1954. While with Projects PASTIME and KIBITZ the agency recruited and trained agents whose main task was to communicate from behind enemy lines after the Soviet invasion, Project LCPROWL formed a large paramilitary branch that would engage in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and other similar activities on D-Day. Through the Gehlen Organization, the CIA controlled yet another stay-behind network, code-named SATURN. This research analyzes and investigates the strengths and weaknesses of each covert project. It uncovers, through a comparison between the various stay-behind operations, the reasons that have led to major operational failures. The article concludes with the role played by these clandestine activities in the larger struggle of the United States to confront the Soviet Union.

Keywords: CIA, PASTIME, Gehlen Organization, KIBITZ, LCPROWL

Introduction

The end of World War Two and the beginning of the Cold War radically altered international relations and compelled the United States to confront the growing threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies. The shift of the latter from a status of ally to that of foe had tremendous consequences for United States intelligence as its different components had to adapt to the requirements of the new geostrategic situation. With the containment policy it delineated, the Truman Doctrine of 1947 clarified the American official stance and provided the U.S. intelligence community with general guidelines on how to conform towards the Soviet bellicosity. The Berlin Crisis of 1948, and the start of the Korean War in 1950, exacerbated tensions and increased the fear of the United States that the Soviet Union would invade Western Europe. Accordingly, U.S. intelligence realized that, in parallel to the standard collection and dissemination of intelligence, it had to find appropriate tools to guarantee that, after the beginning of hostilities and an eventual occupation of Western countries by the Red Army, it would have agents behind enemy lines to maintain secret communications with U.S. headquarters and conduct sabotage activities.

The central position of Germany in Europe and the creation of the U.S. sponsored Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in May 1949 implied that the latter was to be in the first line of defense against the Eastern Bloc and that the efforts of U.S. intelligence to maintain a tactical equilibrium or to gain momentum in the covert war against the Russians had to be centered around that country. Fearing a possible invasion of West Germany and its occupation by the Russians, U.S. intelligence decided to create stay-behind networks that would only activate in case of a Soviet invasion.¹

The benefits of having disguised soldiers or agents in the opponent's camp or country were already perceived during the antiquity, as mentioned by the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu.² The Trojan War of Homer would not have ended with the fall of Troy were it not for the soldiers who had 'stayed-behind'

inside the Trojan horse, waiting to be introduced inside the walls of the city to open the gates to their companions and start their work of destruction. In modern warfare, partisan and guerilla tactics, including sabotage activities, have proven their efficiency on numerous occasions, for instance in almost all the theatres of conflict during World War II. In the final days of the Third Reich, the Nazis themselves had implemented a post-war resistance scheme that would allow the defeated Germans to continue the fight against the Allies. Coming under the strict control of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler and the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), this secret plan was known as the Werewolf.³

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was certainly the most active element of the U.S. intelligence community in West Germany at the end of the 1940's. The successor of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), it was created in 1947 as a non-departmental agency to conduct intelligence and counterintelligence activities for the United States government. After its dismantlement in September 1945, the OSS was replaced first by the Strategic Services Unit (SSU), an organization that came under the authority of the military and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and that reunited the intelligence and counterintelligence branches of the OSS, and then by the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), a body which had more of a coordinating task than anything else. The growing threats from the Soviet Union made the Truman administration realize, however, the need for a peacetime civilian intelligence agency, a fact that ultimately led to the establishment of the CIA.

At the time of its creation, the agency lacked an effective tool in such intelligence fields as psychological warfare and covert operations, especially since its main branch, the Office of Special Operations (OSO), was mainly concerned with the clandestine collection and dissemination of foreign intelligence.⁴ The situation changed one year after the creation of the CIA. Founded in June 1948 under the name of Office of Special Projects, the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) was a semi-clandestine agency inside the CIA that had in charge covert operations and psychological warfare.⁵ Even though part of the Agency, it was in fact under the joint authority of the Department of State and the Department of Defense. In 1952, the OSO and the OPC were merged into the Directorate of Plans inside the CIA, with the agency acquiring full control of the OPC.

In the period 1948-1950, both the OPC and the OSO established stay-behind networks in West Germany. While with Projects PASTIME and KIBITZ the CIA mainly focused in recruiting and forming agents that would communicate from behind enemy lines after a Soviet invasion, the OPC, in accordance with its original mission and prerogatives, established, with Project LCPROWL, a wide paramilitary branch that would engage in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and other similar activities on D-Day. Moreover, through the Gehlen Organization, the CIA controlled yet another stay-behind network, code-named SATURN.⁶

Few studies have been devoted to the say-behind networks established by the United States in Western Europe in general, and in Germany in particular.⁷ Timothy Naftali's article on the release by NARA of new records concerning various CIA stay-behind projects in the FRG brought more light on the issue and paved the way for additional research.⁸ Daniele Ganser's controversial work has focused on the stay-behind networks created by the United States in various European countries and their links with rightist groups and the so-called 'Strategy of Tension.'⁹ Based on the analysis of released archives, the recent work of Erich Schmidt-Eenboom and Ulrich Stoll has expanded our knowledge on the organization of covert cells in West Germany and revealed the extent of U.S. involvement.¹⁰ No research has yet focused, however, on the overall strengths and weaknesses of the different stay-behind projects implemented by the CIA in the Federal Republic in the early Cold War, thus leaving aside an important aspect of the issue.

This research paper will first analyze the various stay-behind projects implemented by the CIA in West Germany in the early Cold War. It will then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the programs in a second step before ending with an assessment of their results and overall efficiency.

Project PASTIME

Implemented by the Berlin Operations Base (BOB) of the CIA, PASTIME was activated in 1948 and terminated in 1954. According to CIA Headquarters in Washington D.C., the project came “at the head of the list among [our] intelligence efforts in Germany.”¹¹ PASTIME consisted in the recruitment and training of Wireless Transmitter (W/T) operators and specialists, and the burial of radio sets in underground caches. A standard cache would include radio equipment, money, a pistol and machine-gun, ammunition, clothing, rations, and medical supplies.¹² Recruited indigenous agents were placed under the control of trained American case officers. The target areas were Berlin and the Eastern zone, the U.S. zone, and the Bremen area.¹³

Under the project four type of stay-behind operations were envisaged for the dormant cells: long-term range activities, short-term range activities, recruitment and training, and the burial of equipment.¹⁴ The stay-behind teams involved in short-term range activities would activate immediately after the invasion phase while those concerned with long-term range activities would only activate after the occupation phase. Other stay-behind teams would focus on recruiting indigenous personnel that would engage in intelligence work for the Americans.

By October 1951, 10 burials had been operated by the BOB.¹⁵ In the beginning of 1952, a report mentioning the requirements of the base for its stay-behind activities gave the number of 54 containers, with each container including 3 Belgian automatic pistols, 150 rounds ammunition, and 2 hand grenades.¹⁶

The BOB was very much interested in using the know-how of former German communications specialists in its stay-behind project, as stressed in one of its reports:

If...we deem it advisable to hire W/T recruits from groups of low security because of their previous records in W/T work, then perhaps some of the following moves should be considered: a) Have the lists of former German intercept personnel who are now or were in the past located in Berlin, sent to BOB ... KOB has also followed up this line and we would appreciate any Berlin leads they may have uncovered. If we do not actually use these individuals themselves, we might very likely find that they can put us on the track of others who have not been registered on any lists, or at least indicate people to us who may be interested in W/T work, but who have never had the opportunity to follow up their inclinations. b) Have the leads to former German army signal corps personnel located in Berlin sent to KOB.¹⁷

The demand for German W/T experts was further repeated in a report sent by the Karlsruhe Station to CIA Headquarters in August 1951. According to the file, the hiring of agents could be facilitated if the station received “lists of German operators who had seen service during World War II.”¹⁸ In a report written in the beginning of 1952, the need for former *Wehrmacht* generals was recalled: “Ex-German Army officers, particularly general staff types, would be valuable. However, in such cases, care must be exercised in preventing defections to the West German Government or to ZIPPER.”¹⁹

Even though there are no records specifically mentioning it, it is more than probable that some agents of the network were sent out of Germany and resettled in other parts of the world at the termination of the project since lists of agents and their families to be evacuated were drawn by the CIA field agencies.²⁰ This assumption is strengthened by the fact that stay-behind agents of another project were evacuated to Canada.²¹

As almost the same time the CIA was developing its first direct stay-behind effort in West Germany with PASTIME, it decided to expand the operation to other parts of the country, with another project code-named KBITZ.

Project KIBITZ

KIBITZ was implemented by the Karlsruhe Operations Base (KOB) of the German Mission of the CIA. It was activated in 1949 and terminated in 1953. The project was concerned with the recruitment and training of stay-behind agents, the burial of equipment in secret caches, the establishment of aerial drop zones and safe houses, and the identification of border crossing routes. The stay-behind teams included a radio operator together with few other agents.

By October 1951, 13 underground caches had been established throughout West Germany.²² By February 1952, 15 stay-behind teams of 2 to 10 men had been created by the Base.²³ Many of the recruits were physically handicapped men as the KOB had a policy of hiring individuals who were accustomed to long periods of isolation, ready to communicate via radio with the CIA field station.²⁴ KIBITZ agents were either directly hired by the KOB or recruited by the chief German agent of the project, *Oberstleutnant* Walter Kopp, code-named KIBITZ-15. The latter personally selected around 70 operatives as part of a large net of stay-behind agents.

The whole project made a large use of Nazis and former officers of the *Wehrmacht*, including some who had served in the Eastern Front, and avoided intelligence specialists.²⁵ The men recruited by Kopp were considered by the Americans closer “to the NSDAP line than anything else.”²⁶ The flaws held by Walter Kopp, the chief leader of the project, were many; they included “his SS record and (especially) his admittedly unregenerated Nazism, anti-non-Aryanism, Anglophobia, Francophobia.”²⁷ He was further described in another report as an “anti-Semite.”²⁸ Many of his recruits had belonged to the SS or the *Waffen-SS*.²⁹ *SS-Brigadeführer* Dr. Richard Wagner, a former member of the *Reichstag* and of the NSDAP, was code-named KIBITZ-189.³⁰ *SS-Hauptsturmführer der Waffen-SS* Hans Rues had served in the notorious *7. SS-Division Prinz Eugen*.³¹ Many of those hired had belonged to the signals or engineer units of the *Wehrmacht*, or to the *Luftwaffe*.³² Described in a CIA file as “a good National Socialist,” *Major* Otto Buchhorn, code-named KIBITZ-150, had served as the commander of *Pionier-Bataillon 125*.³³ *Hauptmann* Werner Esterriedt, code-named KIBITZ-131, had served in *Pionier-Bataillon 5*.³⁴ Alfred Görtz (KIBITZ-156), Alois Hummel (KIBITZ-180), and Alois Pollinger (KIBITZ-20) had all served in the *Luftwaffe*.³⁵

At the termination of the project, due to the sensitivity and the nature of the work undertaken, dozens of agents were evacuated to Canada, following a personal request, in this matter, from the Director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, to the Canadian authorities.³⁶

While both PASTIME and KIBITZ were mainly concerned with the recruitment of stay-behind agents and the burial of equipment in order to facilitate communications in a post-hostilities period, other projects, much more controversial, were purely devoted to sabotage activities and psychological warfare.

Project LCPROWL

One of the most controversial projects conducted in West Germany by the CIA and its quasi-autonomous branch, the OPC, was LCPROWL, the sponsoring and funding of an organization known as the League of German Youth (*Bund Deutscher Jugend* or BDJ). The BDJ was created by Paul Egon Lüth in June 1950. Lüth first offered to put his organization at the disposal of the United States to American officials stationed in the Federal Republic, who in turn directed him to CIA representatives. The league, which was created on an anti-Communist basis, and acted on an overt basis, was used by the CIA in various propaganda activities such as printing and distributing pro-American pamphlets, leaflets, and other similar documentation.

After having taken control of the BDJ, the OPC decided to establish what came to be known as the Technical Service (*Technische Dienst*) of the BDJ, a secret paramilitary organization that would operate as a stay-behind network after the invasion and occupation of West Germany.³⁷ The reasons behind the creation of the Apparat, the other name for the Technical Service of the BDJ, are found in a document describing the aims and goals of the OPC's secret warfare policy in Germany:

United States military commitments in Western Europe make it essential that German manpower be utilized as a source of resistance, guerilla, and sabotage personnel for the D-Day and post D-Day requirements of the NATO forces. Until such time as a reliable German Intelligence service has been established, the task of maintaining anti-Communist stay-behind and resistance nuclei in the Federal Republic and expanding similar forces in East Germany must be undertaken by OPC. This action is considered a precautionary measure to insure trained resistance assets for NATO's use should a general war break out before the West German government has been able to prepare similar covert forces of its own in collaboration with OPC.³⁸

Members of the Apparat were hired from the ranks of the BDJ and had to sever the links with the latter after recruitment. Established as a resistance organization that would activate at the start of hostilities, fighting and harassing the Russian invaders, the Apparat thus became an independent organization with its own men, its own networks, and its own goals.

Even before its monitoring of the BDJ and the creation of the *Technische Dienst*, the OPC had established 48 caches in West Germany in 1951, caches that included weapons, explosives, and medical equipment.³⁹ The stay-behind network expanded rapidly, with the establishment of more dormant cells in both of West and East Germany and the recruitment of more agents and radio operators. By June 1951, the Apparat included 2,800 West Germans and 41 East Germans.⁴⁰

Very well organized, the secret organization had a military structure and was present geographically in all the *Länder* of West Germany. The original goal was to create a fighting force of 7000 men. In 1950, the organization included a leader, 9 sub-leaders, and units that covered every neighborhood of West Germany. In the northern part of the country, the main effort targeted maritime activities, in Central Germany the main activities centered on scientific and economic sabotage, while in the south the main specialization was guerilla warfare.⁴¹ As to W/T activities, the Apparat was divided into two broad groups: one that would serve the clandestine needs of the paramilitary branch after invasion and another that would devote itself to the establishment of secure communications with CIA bases.⁴² In 1951, the Apparat was reorganized into two main groups, Group A for rail destruction and communications' disruption, and Group B for the fighting and sabotage force.⁴³

Recruitment policy regarding former Nazis and *Wehrmacht* officers in LCPROWL was not different from the one found in KIBITZ. As denounced by Hessian Minister-President August Zinn, the Americans had allowed themselves to be associated with "an irresponsible bunch of SS rowdies."⁴⁴ Many in the BDJ or the Apparat had belonged to different branches of the SS and many also had had a controversial wartime record. Alfred Heise, leader of the BDJ in Nordheim-Westphalen, had killed a *Wehrmacht* doctor in the final days of the war.⁴⁵ According to historians Erich Schmidt-Eenboom and Ulrich Stoll, Heise had belonged to the Hitler Youth (*Hitler-Jugend*).⁴⁶ *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Walter Schmidt who had served during the war as the commander of the *SS-Panzer Grenadier-Regiment 96* was the Bremen leader of the Apparat.⁴⁷ *SS-Obersturmführer* Karl Jobke, a former member of the NSDAP, the *Hitler-Jugend*, and the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or RSHA) who had served in an *Einsatzkommando* during the war, was an Apparat state leader.⁴⁸ *SS-Obersturmbannführer*

der Waffen-SS Eberhard Tellkamp and *SS-Obersturmführer der Waffen-SS* Helmut Vogt had served in the military branch of the SS.⁴⁹ *SS-Sturmbannführer* Friedrich Carstenn, another member of the Apparat, had belonged to the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst* or SD).⁵⁰

While PASTIME, KIBITZ, and LCPROWL were projects directly implemented by the CIA, the agency also ran a stay-behind network through the cover of the Gehlen Organization, the German intelligence it sponsored and financed.

Project SATURN

The ZIPPER F-net, as the stay-behind project of the Gehlen Organization was originally known, was initiated in early 1949, at the time in which the organization was still under U.S. Army patronage. After the CIA took control in 1949, the project was fully sponsored and financed by the agency, coming under the direct supervision of the American staff at Pullach, who in turn reported to Foreign Division M and the OSO at CIA headquarters in Washington D.C. The goals of the stay-behind operation were to create teams of radio operators and agents that would report on the Russian order of Battle and troop movements and provide military estimates after the Soviet invasion. The intelligence to be collected was primarily concerned with military issues in the short term (invasion phase), and military, political, and economic issues in the long term (occupation phase).⁵¹ By April 1950 the Gehlen Organization had recruited and formed 54 stay-behind agents and 20 W/T operators, all located in the north and south of West Germany and in the Rhineland.⁵² By the end of 1952, SATURN consisted in a headquarters of 20 individuals, 5 regional districts across West Germany, each with a regional command of 4 men, and 86 field agents, either operational or in training.⁵³ The field teams usually consisted of 2 men, an agent and a W/T operator. Caches were established containing W/T equipment, gold, and rations.

Initially developed as an effort to create stay-behind teams for the collection and dissemination of intelligence through radio communications, the secret project gradually evolved into a large stay-behind program covering different types of operations. Most SATURN target missions were concerned with the post-hostilities period, as the stay-behind cells would evolve from a dormant status to an active one either during the invasion phase or during the occupation phase. The tasks included the collection of intelligence in times of war, the establishment of W/T communications behind enemy lines, the burial of radio sets and weapons, the selection of safe houses, the identification of dropping and collection zones, the evasion of selected individuals, the choice of military targets, and the recruitment of local agents.⁵⁴

By 1955 SATURN had become the code name for several stay-behind sub-projects, each having its own cryptonym: STORCH for the recruitment and training of stay-behind cells made of 2-men teams in West Germany, FOX for the stay-behind teams of 4-5 men responsible for selecting drop and landing zones for air-reception, AFU Program for the stay-behind teams in Berlin and East Germany, NADEWALD for the Evasion and Escape Program of the Gehlen Organization and later the BND, and WIESEL for the burial of special equipment in secret caches.⁵⁵

Parts of SATURN continued to be financed by the CIA after the evolution of the Gehlen Organization into the BND in 1955. The whole program was still active in 1961.

Evaluation

While all of KIBITZ, PASTIME, and SATURN achieved considerable success in the recruitment of agents and operators and could be considered as carrying more strengths than weaknesses, the same cannot be said of LCPROWL. As the U.S. stay-behind activities developed, the shortcomings of the project almost threatened to put an end to the whole effort of the Americans.

In September 1952, a scandal erupted when Hans Otto, a member of the Apparat, denounced the organization to the Hessian authorities. The Hessian police subsequently raided the houses of the

American case officer and some of the leaders of the organization. Hessian Minister-President August Zinn brought the affair to the public when, addressing the Hessian regional parliament, he denounced a covert organization involved in illegal activities. Zinn's speech and the subsequent arrests in the following days amplified the crisis as revelations unleashed. Amongst the incriminating evidence found by the Hessian police were proscription lists that included the names of around 80 members of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* or SPD) to be 'silenced' after an invasion of West Germany by the Russians⁵⁶ and a document including recommendations on how to kill "undesirables."⁵⁷ Other files included a memorandum "instructing the BDJ resistance group not to take prisoners, but to shoot them instead."⁵⁸

The CIA attempted to get its hands on some of the files before their seizure by the state police; it took possession, for instance, of a suitcase belonging to the chief German agent of the Apparat which included compromising material. When asked to deliver the files by the joint German-American investigation commission which had been created to inquire into the whole affair, the Americans removed incriminating evidence before handing the documents to the Germans.⁵⁹

The revelations on the BDJ prompted 5 German states to ban the organization as the Hessian authorities brought to trial five of its main leaders, including its founder, Paul Egon Lüth, and the head of the Apparat, Erhardt Peters. The main charges included "illegal partisan activity, planning civil war, [and] right and left wing radicalism."⁶⁰

The joint German-American investigation commission ceased its activities at the end of October 1952, amidst growing pressure from the CIA on the Hessian authorities to transfer the case to the West German Federal Prosecutor, as it was considered that the federal authorities would adopt a more favorable stance towards U.S. interests. The Americans proved right since when the federal judicial authorities took the case, they expurgated it from all serious charges. Max Güde, Public Prosecutor General of the Federal Court of Justice, stated on October 30 1952 that the files seized did not include "basis for any prosecution" and that there were no killing lists nor lists including names of SPD leaders.⁶¹ On 13 November 1952, the Federal Public Prosecutor released the leaders of the BDJ and the Apparat and dropped all charges against them.⁶²

When the scandal erupted, the CIA did not hesitate to blackmail SPD leaders so that they stopped pressuring Hessian authorities to go on with the charges against some leaders of the Apparat. A file found in the CIA LCPROWL records thus included clear threats towards the Socialist leaders:

The SPD leaders ought to be given a stern (but confidential) warning on the highest possible level, telling them that we want to cooperate with them, but can under no circumstances tolerate their interference with our operations and that if they should persist in injuring our interests we have ample possibilities to do them grave damage in retaliation. If we, for instance, would ever allow the fact that SPD chairman Erich Ollenhauer was during the war on the OSS payroll (as were quite a few other SPD leaders) to leak, it would end not only his political career, but hurt the party's chances in next year's general elections very seriously. Similarly, the disclosure that the SPD, while screaming in public about American support of the BDJ, continued to accept American money for its own propaganda, would be very harmful for the party, especially if well timed in the election campaign.⁶³

The threats could explain, in part, the moderate stance adopted by SPD leader Ollenhauer who attempted to soften the position of Hessian Minister-President Zinn throughout the whole affair. To cover the illegals actions of the Apparat, the CIA used other controversial means as it chose, for instance, to put the blame and responsibility on the American case officer:

An investigation which has been made of the so called Technical Service of the BDJ has revealed that in a number of instances [sanitized] the U.S. officer working with the Technical Service, exceeded his authority and disobeyed specific instructions given him by his superiors. It should be borne in mind, however, that those German nationals who worked with [sanitized] in the Technical Service had no way of ascertaining which of his instructions were issued in furtherance of U.S. policy then extant, and which of his orders were issued only on his own authority.⁶⁴

That the actions of the Apparat did not originate from deliberate instructions of the case officer but were rather the outcome of secret U.S. policy is proven by another CIA document. Recalling the attempts to bear full responsibility on the case officer, the file stated: "The proposed statement from General Truscott that [sanitized] exceeded his authority by engaging in political intelligence activities is (1) not true and (2) suggests that this intelligence agency did not exercise proper control and does not know, over a period of a year, what activities its agents are carrying on."⁶⁵

The CIA also asked political authorities in Bonn for help in an attempt to cover up the scandal. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, a trustful ally of the Americans, issued a statement supporting the U.S. position and insisting on the sincerity of their claims. According to him, "the American authorities had no knowledge of the political activities of the resistance group" and "such activities never have been condoned."⁶⁶ Adenauer's National Security advisor and closest aide Hans Globke, himself a CDU member, also aligned himself on the American position, considering that the SPD was attempting to establish a feud between the United States and the West German government and that the actions of the Apparat were not liable to criminal charges.⁶⁷

The two most important men in the Federal Republic, including the head of government, thus found themselves compelled to make false public claims because of a covert operation that had gone wrong.

Results

Unlike what is the case with other types of intelligence activities, the assessment of the success or failure of a stay-behind operation is difficult to reach since the main criteria of evaluation is the degree of efficiency of the sleeping nets after that an invasion by a hostile power has taken place. The absence of invasion or occupation thus significantly decreases the capacity to provide a full evaluation of a stay-behind network. It remains nevertheless true that several external factors can be taken into account to provide an overall assessment. While some of the stay-behind projects undertaken by the United States intelligence in the FRG experienced a relative success, others proved a total failure.

Public exposure of the activities of LCPROWL had created such a huge controversy that the CIA was compelled to put an end to its support of the BDJ at the end of 1952. There are no doubts that LCPROWL-Apparat proved to be a major failure that could have had tremendous repercussions if the West German Federal authorities had not decided to drop the charges against the leading indigenous agents of the project. The fact that the American case officer of the Apparat was fired from the CIA after the revelations leaves no doubt as to the tremendous shortcomings of the operation. The major mistake made by the CIA in LCPROWL is that it did not establish a clear separation between the overt BDJ and the secret organization known as the Technical Service or Apparat. As the leaders of the latter had belonged to the BDJ and as its members had been recruited from the overt organization, it was only natural that, once members of the youth organization were arrested, the police authorities would end up discovering the illegal activities of the secret group. Moreover, the fact that LCPROWL was an operation that was devised by the OPC, unlike PASTIME and KIBITZ which were both created and implemented

by the OSO, explains up to a certain extent the failure of the project, especially its secret paramilitary side. Indeed, while the OSO was mainly formed of individuals who had had a long work experience in the field of intelligence, most having served in the OSS or the SSU, many in the OPC had been recruited by its head Frank Wisner without prior intelligence experience.⁶⁸ The OPC was relatively a new and fresh organization which came into existence because of the constraints linked to the necessity of conducting guerilla and psychological warfare at a time when the Soviet Union was more threatening than ever.

The CIA encountered several problems in its stay-behind operations, probably due to the fact that it lacked the necessary experience since all the projects had been devised from scratch and in a short period of time. A technical deficiency illustrating this trend was the fact that the equipment buried in underground caches deteriorated after a certain period of time, requiring the exhumation and replacement of the material.⁶⁹

The relative short duration of KIBITZ could be explained by several factors. The project came to an end in 1953, at around the same period than the LCPROWL affair erupted, and at a time the United States was reassessing the security measures associated with its various stay-behind activities in fear of the implications stemming from any eventual revelations on the operation. The recruitment policy of the main German agent of KIBITZ certainly played an important part in this regard. As Kopp was indiscriminately hiring former Nazi and SS personnel in his stay-behind net in the name of the United States, the CIA considered that revelations on its recruitment of Nazis might definitely compromise the support it benefited from on the part of the West German population.

The main reason for the termination of PASTIME and KIBITZ was the fact that after the BDI scandal the CIA realized that any efficient stay-behind project would necessarily need the approval of the West German authorities, especially since negotiations for the West German Republic to regain full sovereignty were in full swing in the period 1953-1954. In this perspective, the decision to rely solely on the stay-behind effort of the Gehlen Organization proved to be in accordance with the new U.S. official policy. The latter was summarized in the following words: "Since the fall of 1952, it has been CIA policy not to conduct stay-behind activities in Western Germany, other than those involving intelligence collection, except with the knowledge and consent of the host government. The Director specifically stated that no unconventional warfare stay-behind activities would be conducted in West Germany without the knowledge of the Federal Republic government."⁷⁰

Even if by its implementation of PASTIME, KIBITZ, and LCPROWL, the CIA showed its reluctance to allow Gehlen to monitor and control all its stay-behind activities in West Germany, it was probably the SATURN project of the Gehlen Organization that proved the most successful. The fact that it was still active in 1960 shows its viability, and hence its success. In this perspective, both KIBITZ and PASTIME ultimately proved to be a tremendous waste of money and time since the CIA had finally come to the conclusion that the Gehlen Organization, and its successor organization the BND, could itself run an efficient stay-behind operation at minimum costs for the interests of the United States. As stated in a SATURN report, "ZIPPER participation in the project lessens attributability to ODYOKE [United States Government] of any activities that may be compromised."⁷¹

The American sponsored German organization gained a relative success in its stay-behind operation first and foremost because it possessed men who were highly experienced in this field, having served during the war in positions that required infiltration behind enemy lines, sabotage, psychological warfare, and the like. This was especially the case for the individuals who had served in *Abwehr II* and *Abwehr III* commands, in Zeppelin type operations, and in the FAK detachments.⁷² Gehlen himself had a relative experience on how to establish a successful stay-behind operation since in the last months of the war he had studied, together with the SS, the best means to establish a post-war resistance movement.⁷³

Conclusion

The U.S. stay-behind activities in Germany have to be considered as part of a larger scheme to establish dormant cells in all the countries of Western Europe targeted by a possible Soviet invasion. On October 24, 1990, addressing the Chamber of Deputies, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti disclosed the existence in Italy, during the Cold War, of a secret stay-behind organization code-named GLADIO and revealed similarly that such networks had been created in every country of Western Europe, ready to activate following a Russian invasion. The parliamentary commissions established in several European countries to inquire on these covert networks bear witness to the fact that there existed indeed paramilitary formations aiming at creating havoc in case of a Soviet invasion. In this perspective, the United States succeeded in preparing what has been up to now the largest and most sophisticated known post-hostilities organization created by a single country.

It is almost certain that many files concerning the stay-behind networks are still classified, due to the sensitive nature of the issue. While some scholars, like Glanser for instance, consider that the Apparat created by LCPROWL was in fact the stay-behind effort of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as part of a wider European scheme to establish post-hostilities resistance groups, nothing in the files released by the CIA regarding the project corroborates these claims.⁷⁴

The burial of weapons in underground caches by U.S. intelligence agencies is a highly disturbing aspect, especially since it has become known in the recent years that several European right-wing groups have benefited from the support of intelligence services of their countries and that some were involved in some of the terror acts that shook Western Europe during the years of lead and the so-called strategy of tension.

It is more than probable that stay-behind activities are conducted by American intelligence agencies in various parts of the world today, using local youth to serve the long time interests of the United States, a factor which is also highly disturbing. After the revelations on the Apparat, a newspaper, the *Deutsche Zeitung, Stuttgart*, best summarized the whole issue when it wrote that the “political idealism of the German youth is being abused in a manner that may well be called criminal.”⁷⁵

Endnotes

¹ The declassification by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), starting from 2005, of hundreds of CIA files related to the issue has paved the way for research in this specific field.

² See Sun Tzu 1993.

³ For studies on the Werewolf see Biddiscombe 1998. Hereafter non-English words, including military ranks, are italicized.

⁴ For the tasks and prerogatives of the OSO see Report on the Office of Special Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency by the Deputy Assistant Director of Special Operations (Kirkpatrick), in United States, Department of State 2007:202.

⁵ For the mission and purpose of the OPC see National Security Council Directive on Office of Special Projects, in United States, Department of State 1996: document 292.

⁶ Code-named ZIPPER, the Gehlen Organization, named after its head Reinhard Gehlen, was initially the small group of German General Staff officers who were recruited by the U.S. Army in 1946 to conduct intelligence activities for the United States. After a rapid expansion, it came under the control of the CIA in 1949 before evolving into the Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst* or BND) of the Federal Republic in 1955.

⁷ Even though few academic studies have been written on the issue, the recent declassification by NARA of records related to the subject has led to the creation of several websites devoted to the stay-behind concept and to the American activities in this field.

⁸ Naftali (undated).

⁹ Ganser 2005.

¹⁰ Schmidt-Eenboom and Stoll 2015.

¹¹ For Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, and [sanitized] Berlin, Operational Fall Pastime, 25 July 1948, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 1.

- ¹² Chief, FDM, to Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, Operational: CADEAU, 9 August 1950, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 1.
- ¹³ Draft, Plan for Stay-Behind Operations, Germany, 1 September 1949, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 1.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Staybehind Operations in Germany, 9 October 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ¹⁶ EE/SO/[sanitized], to EE/SO/[sanitized], Subject: Division Requirements for Stay-behind Burials, 19 February 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ¹⁷ Agenda for Discussion of Stay Behind Operations, undated, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 1.
- ¹⁸ Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, to Chief, Foreign Division M, Subject: Recruitment of w/T Operators for Pastime purposes, 24 August 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ¹⁹ Chief, EE, to Chief of Station, Frankfurt, Operational PASTIME, 8 February 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ²⁰ See for instance Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, to Chief, EE, Evacuation Lists, 4 September 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ²¹ See NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ²² Staybehind Operations in Germany, 9 October 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ²³ EE/SO/G[sanitized] to EE/SO[sanitized], Subject: Summary of West German (non-ZIPPER) Staybehind activities, 1 February 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.
- ²⁴ Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, to Chief, Foreign Branch M, Progress Report- KIBITZ, 17 March 1949, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 40, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 1.
- ²⁵ A report written at the end of 1951 summarized the American recruitment policy concerning the KIBITZ project: "It should be remembered that our stay-behind personnel are not professional intelligence agents. To the contrary, we have avoided men of intelligence employment history and are building with men whose ideals demand that they enter Western freedom's fight against Communism," in Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, to Chief, Foreign Division M, 17 September 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 40, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 1.
- ²⁶ Chief, FHB, to Chief, EE, KIBITZ Assets, Problems, and Recommended Future, 5 September 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2. The National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or NSDAP) was the Nazi Party.
- ²⁷ From [sanitized] to Peter Sichel, Subject: Review of KIBITZ, 13 October 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ²⁸ Chief, FHB, to Chief, EE, KIBITZ-15, 10 April 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ²⁹ The *Waffen-SS* was the military branch of the SS.
- ³⁰ Chief of Station, Frankfurt, to Chief, EE, Identification of Agents and/or Potential Agents, 6 August 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ³¹ NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, box 110, Hans Rues Name File.
- ³² Part of the *Wehrmacht*, the *Luftwaffe* was the German Air Force during the Nazi era.
- ³³ Chief, EE, to Chief of Station, Frankfurt, 7 July 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ³⁴ Chief of Station, Frankfurt, to Chief, EE, Identification of Agents and/or Potential Agents, 6 August 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ³⁵ Secret Security Information, KIBITIZ Teams, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ³⁶ See NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 41, Subject File KIBITZ, Vol. 2.
- ³⁷ For other studies on the U.S. sponsoring of the Technical Service of the BDJ see Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies*.
- ³⁸ Project LCPROWL, Amendment No. 3, undated, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.
- ³⁹ Monthly Project Status Report for May 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.
- ⁴⁰ Monthly Project Status Report for Month of August 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.
- ⁴¹ Project LCPROWL, Amendment No. 3, undated, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.
- ⁴² Monthly Project Status Report for Month of November 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.
- ⁴³ The Apparat, 24 September 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁴⁴ Chief of Base, Bonn, to Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, 7 November 1952, Operational/LCPROWL, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁴⁵ Chief, CADOUR, to Chief, EE, 9 January 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 3.

⁴⁶ See Schmidt-Eenboom and Stoll 2015:68. A mass organization, the Hitler Youth was one of the branches of the Nazi Party.

⁴⁷ From the American Consulate General, Bremen, to the Department of State, Washington, Subject: Former activities of local Technischer Dienst, January 30 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 3.

⁴⁸ Memorandum for Chief, EE-3, 27 March 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, box 62, Karl Jobke Name File. The *Einsatzkommandos* were part of the infamous *Einsatzgruppen*, the killing squads of the SS that were sent to the Soviet Union in 1941 to operate at the rear of the *Wehrmacht* and eliminate the Political Commissars of the Red Army, Partisans, Jews, and the other enemies of the National Socialist ideology. The RSHA was the agency responsible for security and police matters during the Third Reich.

⁴⁹ See NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, box 128, Eberhard Tellkamp Name File, and NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, box 133, Helmut Vogt Name File.

⁵⁰ Memorandum for Chief, EE-3, Subject: Carstenn, Gottlieb Fried, 15 February 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, box 19, Friedrich Carstenn Name File. Part of the RSHA, the SD was the intelligence organization of the SS and the Third Reich.

⁵¹ Office of Special Operations, Outline of Stay-Behind Operation, 10 November 1950, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁵² Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, to Chief, Pullach Operations Base, 18 April 1950, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁵³ Status Report of ZPPER Stay-Behind Program, as of November 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁵⁴ For other specific missions see Chief of Station, Karlsruhe, to Chief, Foreign Division M, Operational, 9 June 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 31, CIA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE BND, 1949-1956, Vol. 2.

⁵⁵ German Intelligence Service - Data for Wartime Use, undated, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁵⁶ Chief of Base, Bonn, to Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, Operational/LCPROWL, 7 November 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid. The SPD was, together with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* or CDU), one of the two most important political parties in the Federal Republic.

⁵⁸ Memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans), Subject: Further Developments in the West German Police Investigation of the Paramilitary Adjunct of the League of German Youth, 6 November 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁵⁹ Chief of Base, Bonn, to Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, 7 November 1952, Operational/LCPROWL, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁶⁰ Memorandum for [sanitized] Chief, EE/PP/Germany, Subject: Analysis of SPD Whitebook on the Bund Deutscher Jugend (BDJ), 15 April 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 2.

⁶¹ Memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans), Subject: Further Developments in the West German Police Investigation of the Paramilitary Adjunct of the League of German Youth, 6 November 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁶² The BDJ Project, 28 January 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁶³ Memorandum for the Record, Subject: Our Policy in Germany, 11 December 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 43, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 4.

⁶⁴ SR. REP. Frankfurt to Director, CIA, 7 February 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 3.

⁶⁵ Memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans), Subject: Arrest of the Five (5) Leading Members of the Bund Deutscher Jugend and BDJ Apparat, 4 February 1953, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 3.

⁶⁶ Memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans), Subject: Further Developments in the West German Police Investigation of the Paramilitary Adjunct of the League of German Youth, 6 November 1952, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

⁶⁷ For the CDU see endnote 57.

⁶⁸ See Weiner 2007:33.

⁶⁹ Staybehind Operations in Germany, 9 October 1951, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 54, Subject File PASTIME, Vol. 2.

⁷⁰ Memorandum for Chief of Operations, Subject: ZIPPER Evasion and Escape Program, 20 December 1954, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁷¹ Project Outline, CASNIDE, undated, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 60, Subject File SATURN.

⁷² The *Abwehr* was the intelligence branch of the *Wehrmacht*. It was divided into *Abwehr I* (intelligence), *Abwehr II* (sabotage), and *Abwehr III* (counterintelligence). Operation Zeppelin was the code name given to the covert project of the SS to infiltrate commandos behind the Russian lines to conduct special operations. The Front-line Reconnaissance Detachments (*Frontaufklärungskommando* or FAK) were special units of the *Abwehr* who operated behind enemy lines to collect intelligence and conduct sabotage and counterintelligence activities.

⁷³ In the last months of WWII Gehlen was approached by the SS to organize a post-war resistance organization copied on that of the Polish Home Army. Even if the plan did not ultimately materialize, Gehlen had had time to order several studies to be made on the subject. He later used this wartime experience when the Gehlen Organization implemented SATURN.

⁷⁴ See Ganser 2005.

⁷⁵ Reaction of the West German Press to Hesse Minister-President Zinn's revelations about the existence of a guerilla movement within the BDJ, in NARA, RG 263, Entry ZZ-19, box 42, Subject File LCPROWL, Vol. 1.

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