

XIII.

Something Rotten in the State of Belgium

‘Imagine, everywhere you hear that story about a blackmail dossier in which organisations of the extreme right are in the possession of pictures and videos on which a number of prominent people in and around Brussels have sex with young girls; minors it is said. The existence of this dossier has always been vehemently denied, until it was proven that testimonies and videos of this affair indeed were in the possession of the police services.’ - Senator Hugo Coveliers

On the misty and chilled autumn morning of Sunday, 20th October 1996, 350,000 Belgians, dressed in ghostly all-over white, flooded the boulevards of Brussels. The skies above the capital filled with clouds of white balloons. The host moved in a silent flow towards the centre of the city. The patience of a people had finally broken with the authorities of a cobbled-together state of convenience, which throughout its short history failed to acquire the stiffening backbones of genuine nationhood and social harmony between Flemish and French speakers. Now, the grisly affair of Marc Dutroux, the Monster of Charleroi, child abductor and torturer, laid bare a horrifying sickness at the heart of Belgium. The procession of sheeted figures filing quietly through the hushed city that autumn day knew perfectly well that a man guilty of the most terrible crimes had received the protection of the state at the highest levels.

These outrages occurred under the noses of the local gendarmes, who never managed to catch any culprits. Like Dutroux and the organised, politicised gang of paedophiles he belonged to, the killers had enjoyed a charmed immunity from detection. In 2006, the guns and the ammunition used in the Brabant massacres were finally traced, to the supposedly defunct branch of the Belgian stay-behind army called 'the Special Intervention Squadron' - the one known within the Gladio command structure as the 'Diana Organisation' (after the Huntress of Greek mythology).

The rush of changes sweeping Belgium after WW2, coupled with the arrival of powerful new organisations such as NATO and the emerging European Union, crushed any lingering faith in a viable Belgian state. Between them, these powerful institutions superseded and subverted what little there was holding this sorry state together. Crime and graft - much of it politically motivated - unhinged the government. The flow of hot money drawn to Brussels - Europe's very own Chicago - unleashed horrific forces, which undermined the moral bedrock of the country. There was a sense to many observers of this small nation slipping into a kind of mass lunacy, where hallucinations and nightmares unfortunately turned out to be events in real time. Sex trafficking, industrial paedophilia, the reports of snuff movies made for political and financial blackmail, or just for profit, were all entangled in a black cobweb of spies, officially connived drug running, the secret paramilitary network, and the constant meddling of NATO's high command in the internal affairs of the country.

Belgium and its eleven million inhabitants seemed predestined for such a tragic fate. The country is a cast-off from the old Spanish lowland provinces, a failed buffer state arising from Napoleon's sallies around

the region. She finally staggered to a breach with the Netherlands, unilaterally seizing an uneasy form of independence in November 1830. The name was adapted from the tribes of the Belgae, who once inhabited roughly the same quarters in ancient history. Poor ersatz Belgium straddled a number of cultural divides, which made sure it was always an anachronism. This feeble creature had no common language or religion, an artificial capital wracked by gaping cultural divides and for good measure the imported (from Germany) Saxe-Coburg-Gotha monarchy, which immediately set about exploiting their new property as a private corporation. The atrocities committed in the vast Belgian Congo - originally not a colony but a private royal fiefdom, acquired as an early example of 'humanitarian intervention' - made the cross-Atlantic slave trade look like a travel agency. Belgium had the geographical misfortune to lie on every army's march to somewhere else. Crushed and trampled by rival forces in WW1, she found herself once again caught in the open at the start of WW2. The national ethnic divide between French and Flemish speakers was scarcely likely to heal in the circumstances. Many Flemings either openly or symbolically sided with the Germans, in hopes of Flemish nationhood - even within a Nazi commonwealth - doing away with Belgium altogether. Pétainist sympathisers from the Walloon province were also drawn to Nazi colours. The Germans recruited modest numbers from both sides of the ethnic divide to stiffen *Waffen-SS* brigades, but the numbers were less significant than the further damage to the split personality of Belgium itself.

These entrenched yearnings for the far Right were not extinguished by the close of hostilities. A residue from wartime fraternisation with the Germans led to Nazi-style paganistic symbolism and mystical blood

bonding ceremonies within the Belgian stay-behind network and elements of the national armed forces, which in any event inclined to the Right. This mystical streak was set for a chilling significance in shaping many of the perversions yet to be wrought on Belgium. A taste for SS-style initiation rites shipped on board by Belgian wartime volunteers transposed itself to the fascist underground network, which had begun to acquire a stranglehold on so much of the country's public life. Much worse, they leached into the minds of criminal gangs, who began to organise diabolical ceremonies and activities centred on kidnapped children and other victims of sexual exploitation. When the nascent EU institutions began searching for a home, they selected Brussels precisely because of its neutral, small-country image as the 'cockpit of Europe.' The grandness of the compliment unfortunately disguised the truth that Belgium was hopelessly ill-equipped - in terms of civil infrastructure or mentality - to cope with what came next.

And what came next was NATO, evicted in insalubrious circumstances from France. The incoming warriors went about transforming this already schizophrenic state into the Kingdom of NATO. Hot on their heels came the rapid expansion of European federal institutions and the inward rush of huge corporations, eager to edge as close as possible to the councils of these two great caliphates, the most powerful military and economic alliances the world has seen since the Roman Empire. With them came the legions of camp followers: politicians, bankers, lawyers, think-tankers, the Pied Piper legions of PR guru Edward Bernays (nephew of Sigmund Freud), lobbyists, armies of spies and counter-spies, arms traders (straight and shady), drug lords, con-men and criminals. Plus, rivers of money in quantities never before experienced in this small country. Little Belgium soon had the second

most powerful and intrusive crime cartels in Western Europe, so well-organised that even the market leaders, the Italian Mafiosi, fell back in admiration. In a very short time, Europe's cockpit was also its chief narcotics and illegal arms hub, with an even nastier sideline involving human flesh.

The weak fabric of the Belgian state was absolutely unfit to cope with this avalanche. The country staggered along with a decrepit legal system from the 1830's. Policemen went on taking orders from politicians, as of yore. What might have served as some kind of unifying factor - the huge infusion of new wealth - served to set Belgians against each other more than ever before. The centre imploded. Quarrelsome nationalities retreated behind their own zones of influence, leaving Brussels as a quasi-independent, internationalised canton. This virtually complete cleavage spelt the effective end to the 'national experiment.' By the spring of 2010, the 'war of the cantons' confirmed the *de facto* arrival of an apartheid 'separate development' state at the heart of Europe. It was fought over the incomprehensible linguistic contortions of the Halle-Vilvoorde suburbs on the outskirts of Brussels, fiercely Flemish, adamantly opposed to admitting French speakers (in Flemish eyes, settlers). The general election, in June that year, was the rubber stamp. Any shallow-rooted government planted in this unpromising soil has few prospects of long-term survival.

When General Lyman Lemnitzer arrived in Belgium to take charge of the new NATO mission control, the process of national disintegration was already well advanced. Belgium was to be denied a strong, centrally-minded government - if there had ever been a concerted ambition to entertain such a thing - that would persuade Flemish and French speakers to live in harmony. A Belgian nationalist is a

contradiction in terms, whereas a Flemish nationalist qualifies as a patriot. The poor French-speaking Walloons were left wallowing on the margins. The CIA had long been dabbling in Belgian politics. It was recruiting Belgian Nazis - mostly, but not exclusively, Flemish - as soon as the war ended, prodding many of them into high offices at state and provincial levels, and protecting others from justice, or prising them out of jail. But no other country in Europe, not even Italy, experienced more bizarre, or tragic, circumstances than those which now began to unfold in Belgium.

Gladio's activities in Italy pointed to the power that a parallel state could amass, in no small measure due to the Vatican's willingness to steep itself in such ungodly activities as money laundering, and fraternising with organised crime and fascist political structures. But tiny Belgium was blessed with nothing less than a *pair* of Vaticans: the 'European Pentagon,' or NATO; and the 'New Rome,' the rapidly flowering institutions of the EU. Both were outside and above what passed for Belgian civil and criminal law. Once the furniture arriving from France had been uncrated, Lemnitzer assigned his political team the task of creating the strongest possible anti-communist front to shore up the defences of the new NATO principality. Lemnitzer sent for Frank Eaton, a shadowy DIA figure with known leanings to the extreme Right, who plunged into the exotic undergrowth of extremist Belgian politics with relish. He was soon on confidential terms with most of the key figures, and even devised a network to comfort neo-Nazis held in jail.

Lemnitzer looked sourly on the state of Belgian politics, and especially the clout of the powerful socialist unions. Nor could he easily forget that of all repulsive figures, Karl Marx hatched the *Communist*

Manifesto, and effectively the Communist movement, between 1845 and 1848 in the sumptuous gilded surroundings of the 13th-century Grand-Place. By the early 1960s, Belgians were thinking of their country as the 'sick man of the common market.' The economy flagged, weakened further by shaky coalitions and mass strikes, which the unions threw at authority again and again. The establishment arm - big business, the military, intelligence, police and especially the royal family - feared a revolution in the making.

Nerves were thoroughly rattled when the prominent Left-winger Ernest Mandel, echoing the Fourth International, declared the only solution to the endless rolling crisis wracking Belgium was 'a worker's government based on the trade unions.'^(N1) It sounded very much like a clarion call to insurrection. From that moment, NATO strategy was clear: namely to destabilise and knock the socialist movement out of politics altogether. What followed was the criminalisation of Belgian politics to such an extent the political apparatus never recovered - the infection of the state by vice, perversions and a campaign of state-inspired terror that finally broke the back of this thoroughly schizoid country. In classic Gladio fashion, it was first necessary to invent a threat that did not exist, then create the means to deal with it. As a result of NATO's machinations and the industrious efforts of Lemnitzer's imported experts in counter-insurgency, Belgium found itself with twin Ku Klux Klans operating on either side of the linguistic canyon. Belgian Gladio operations divided scrupulously along politically correct lines into SDRA-8 (French) and STC/Mob (Flemish) divisions.

According to journalist Manuel Abramowitz - a leading investigator of the far Right in Belgium - neo-Nazis were egged on to infiltrate all the mechanisms of the state, with special attention reserved for the police

and the army. By the 1980s, this level of penetration had become so deep - thanks to fascist fronts such as the neo-Nazi militia Westland New Post and its French-speaking counterpart, *Front de la Jeunesse* - that Belgium's military forces could be said to have fallen almost entirely under extremist control. Not once, in the wake of the many false-flag operations over the coming decades, did convincing proof ever appear of a credible co-ordinated Left-wing subversive force operating on Belgian soil, while seditious organisations of the Far Right flourished openly. One prominent ex-gendarmerie commander Martial Lekeu - who was eventually given sanctuary in the US for crimes committed in Belgium - informed the Brussels daily *Le Soir*: 'When I joined the Gendarmerie I became a devout fascist. At the Diana Group I got to know people who had the same convictions as me. We greeted each other like the Nazis.'

Before long, the CIA purse was open to a cluster of Right-wing front organisations sprouting in the emerging Euro capital. Some overlapped with espionage networks, for which they were primarily a front. *Le Cercle*, for example, on the surface a respectable talking shop for big business heavyweights and politicians, had a much more important task collecting and feeding enticing tidbits to the CIA and the European intelligence network. It was a kind of private-enterprise spy network, working under US and NATO control and relying on a great many operatives who could supply useful information, even by unorthodox methods. It was hardly surprising that it took on such a twist, given that one of its founders was the French wartime collaborator and arch-Nazi, Jean Violet. Another was the former French premier Antoine Pinay, who belonged to the solid Pétainist Right.^{[\(N2\)](#)}

Descriptions of the Propaganda Due lodge in Italy were heavily overlaid with reports of mystical ceremonies, the swearing of oaths of fealty and bonding vows. The secrecy of the Gladio structure everywhere invited isolation from ordinary structures and restraints of civil society. It was a provocative invitation to escape all moral boundaries. Belgium was lurching into madness. The links between NATO, organised crime and cultist-minded neo-Nazi organisations, started to become institutionalised. At the same time, the long-running rivalry between the CIA and the Pentagon continued to rage on this foreign turf. Lemnitzer found the ideal opportunity in his new seat of power to discriminate against the CIA in favour of his own creature, the Defence Intelligence Agency, which he elevated to a prominent position supervising the Gladio structure. The supremo's old penchant for working with criminals unencumbered by scruples was soon confirmed by the recruitment pattern to stiffen the ranks of Belgian Gladio.

One early DIA recruit was an idealistic fascist signed to the payroll at the tender age of seventeen. His name was Paul Latinus, and his chief qualifications were small-time car thief, street runner and general factotum to the Belgian criminal gangs. His absence of a moral compass qualified him for expensive NATO career training in secret warfare by the British SAS, plus a spell at the US Army's Fort Bragg black ops finishing school; he was then planted as a reserve lieutenant with the Royal Belgian Air Force. He sneaked on politicians and other public officials for state security. This was mainly to set them up for blackmail, which brought him into touch with underground sex channels involving minors. He joined the Front de la Jeunesse and then helped to found its Flemish counterpart, Westland New Post in the early eighties. Latinus reached the ranks of the *crème de la crème* when he was eventually

installed as the head of Group G in the Belgian coup structure code-named F-4, which was maintained on permanent standby, and nearly activated once, in the 1974 crisis. This was the direct thread that led from NATO HQ, to the Belgian national gendarmerie, the Westland New Post militia and then finally to the street gangs who carried out many dirty tricks operations on the orders of higher interests.

Among his regular contacts was Jean-Michel Nihoul, mastermind of the rapidly expanding sex traffic and paedophile industries, and several of his corporals, including the Monster of Charleroi, Marc Dutroux. Latinus was discovered by his girl friend, roped up in the bathroom at his home on 24th April 1984. Post-mortem examinations were inconclusive. Whether he was murdered or killed himself remained unexplained, which the cursory investigations by the police did nothing to answer. Latinus always claimed that he kept a secret file as his life insurance policy. If so, it seems to have worked in reverse. An extremely inconvenient figure connecting the Belgian Gladio operation and the depravity soaking Belgium, was now off the stage.

Dutroux and Latinus knew each other from their common passion for stealing expensive cars. But Latinus' trade speciality was setting up targets for blackmail, which lends strong support to later allegations that child abuse networks had the prime objective of luring clientele into places where they would be secretly filmed with young girls and boys. The content of videos intended for the worldwide black market remains to this day a highly toxic and unresolved mystery, which the Belgian authorities have done all in their power to suppress. When the Dutroux time bomb finally exploded in all its horrific detail, some dozens of victims came forward with alarming stories of snuff movies involving torture, murders, ritual sacrifice, blood drinking and extreme

psychological stress. They mentioned target practice involving child victims. The state's defence has always been that none of this incriminating evidence physically existed, while admitting that much of the material seized by police is concealed from prying eyes. The persistently dogged Belgian MP and subsequently Senator Hugo Coveliers, chairman of the special investigating committee probing gangsterism and terrorism in Belgium (1988-1990), tracked the presence of incriminating materials to a special unit called the 'judicial police.' Here is what Coveliers said on what became known as the 'scandal of the X-Dossiers.'

"Imagine, everywhere you hear that story about a blackmail dossier in which organisations of the extreme right are in the possession of pictures and videos on which a number of prominent people in and around Brussels have sex with young girls; minors it is said. The existence of this dossier has always been vehemently denied. Until it was proven that testimonies and videos of this affair indeed were in the possession of the police services.

The at first non-existing dossier turns out to exist. The videos without substance then turn out to be interesting enough after all to be handed over to the examining magistrate tasked with the investigation into the Gang of Nivelles [held responsible for some of the shop massacres]. But this person subsequently is afraid to testify about that! What do you think has been going on here!"

Incriminating pictures of high officials abusing children would be enough for the state to panic. But in a summary written by a trio of investigative Belgian journalists in 1999 - *The X-Dossiers* - there is powerful evidence, painstakingly accumulated, with all doubtful or unreliable claims discarded, that tapes which the police still hold in

their possession - and insist are 'worthless' - do feature evidence of sadistic abuse connected with public officials.^(N3) Moreover, they lend weight to two extremely dangerous avenues of exploration. One of these leads to an entrapment technique in which victims are lured into ever more perverse activities, and then effectively placed under political blackmail, with no line of retreat. The second points to the chilling possibility that some of the activities reputedly recorded on tape and retained in top secret files, were actually part of cultist initiation ceremonies. It was alleged these involved paganistic neo-Nazi traits such as blood rituals, practised by elements within the state's secret forces, as well as the orthodox military structure.

More disturbing questions were raised by an allegation from a former treasurer of the Parti Social-Chrétien (PSC) youth division called Jacques Thoma. He is on public record as claiming he was once invited to mass orgies by his superior, an associate of Jean-Michel Nihoul and Marc Dutroux. They were explained to him as 'an Opus Dei initiation test.' Once again we find mystical currents seeping from neo-Nazis and the paedophile gangs, implying the possibility of seamless connections to the Vatican's so-called 'church within a church.' Opus Dei, which translates to 'Work of God,' has been accused by its detractors of various ungodly activities, featuring the intimidation of members, denigration of women, and infiltration of governments. The organisation's bonding practices are said by critics to involve self-mortification, with devotees obliged to wear spiked chains around their thighs, whip their buttocks and sleep on hard boards. For all its protestations to the contrary, it is certainly true that Opus Dei operates well below visible radar and venerates secrecy. When I undertook the European Parliament's high-profile probe into family-splitting cults,

Opus Dei attracted by far the largest response in my mailbag, more even than high-profile organisations like the Moonies and Scientology. It was excluded from the report after heavy lobbying from the Vatican hierarchy and its powerful supporters in Strasbourg, including perhaps the most prominent Euro-MP, the late Austro-Hungarian archduke Otto von Habsburg.^[57]

The sickness of institutionalised paedophilia in the Belgian church broke surface with a vengeance in June 2010. The Bishop of Bruges, Mgr. Roger Vangheluwe, resigned after admitting years-long abuse of a single victim; within days, police swooped on a sitting conclave of high church officials, looking for more incriminating materials, seizing computers and many documents. This unprecedented action, which provoked an outraged response from Pope Benedict himself, included the bizarre indulgence of drilling into the tombs of two dead prelates in search of incriminating files, clearly following a tip-off arising from within the church. In this light, the Opus Dei claims begin to carry some credibility. The tottering Belgian government, having quite sufficient problems on its hands already, waved the white flag. Police were ordered to drop all their inquiries and return all the seized materials. But this time the Vatican was itself check-mated. An independent investigator with access to the incriminating materials - which described organised and systematic paedophilia by the Belgian clergy stretching over many years - dumped the entire files in the public realm. It is impossible to avoid a straight connection between a corrupted state which has, effectively, condoned the worst cases of sexual abuse anywhere in Europe, and the Belgian church, which is itself an extended division of the Belgian establishment.

The man long suspected of being the real high priest of the grisly sex rings and drugs rackets was Nihoul, known to intimates - and his alleged victims - as 'Mich.' He was a familiar figure on the shady nightclub circuit, who could be seen in the company of important figures from the Belgian upper crust. He was known as the man who could fix anything to suit particular tastes. He rose up from street gang territory and made good money on the bar and drugs scene to become the most powerful crime boss in the country. He would always talk himself down as a mere 'pub owner.' Those who knew him better understood that his network of alliances was respected by the most powerful élites. Dutroux acted as a pimp and sometimes master of ceremonies for Nihoul's orgies, that were alleged to attract prominent public notables. There was a certain irony when Mr. Big found himself dragged into the limelight concerning his underling. His smirking arrogance at his own court appearances was such that he bawled to reporters that he would never be convicted because he 'knew too much.' So, for that matter, did Latinus, but he was not available after 1984 to answer questions. 'Mich' had another line of defence. Like his corporal Dutroux, he was a police sneak on the side. Thus, a protection racket worked in reverse, even when Dutroux's trafficking, torture and murder of young girls and boys was known to senior officers of the gendarmerie.

There was another link between Nihoul, Latinus and the street gangs that could be highly compromising to both the Belgian state and the Gladio circuit, and which probably accounts for Latinus' sudden exit. He knew a good deal - and probably, far too much - concerning another important figure in Group G. This was Paul Vanden Boeynants ('PvB' for short), the paunchy and wealthy son of a pork butcher, who became defence minister and twice premier. Compared to the average

dour prime minister of Belgium, he had an unusually colourful career. His 'Social Christian Party' was infiltrated by western intelligence, and was really little more than a vehicle for himself. He put his chubby hands to everything that offered profit, beginning with the national gendarmerie's National Bureau for Drugs, where he installed a pliant general who was on the CIA's payroll. His task was to make sure that regular shipments of marihuana and cocaine bound for the CIA crossed the border into Belgium without harassment. Boeynants, the made-good butcher's son, found time to open a meat processing factory in Malta as another cover to wash CIA dope funds.

The narco-traffic flooding Belgium belonged in large part to the CIA's long-established international drug circuits, with a certain amount creamed off by Nihoul and partners in return for co-operation on the marketing side. On his part, PvB's carefully articulated populist charms disguised his control over an enormous bundle of enterprises owing strong connections to the underworld and the CIA. When the time came for scores to be settled, the enemies that he made in the years of good fortune arranged his prosecution for tax evasion. Boeynants responded with threats to sing in no uncertain terms. He was let off with a slap on the wrist, even if his ambitions to become burgomaster (mayor) of Brussels travelled no further.

Then, early in 1989, Vanden Boeynants was kidnapped by members of the well-known Haemers gang, which, it later transpired, had close connections to both Belgian Gladio units and Dutroux's activities. The government tried to pretend he had been snatched by an unknown cell called the 'Socialist Revolutionary Organisation,' which strongly suggested Gladio fingerprints. PvB was held for a month, then released after payment of a whopping ransom. This being the surreal state of

Belgium, there were further twists to the episode. First, the prominent gang boss Patrick Haemers - someone else who knew too much - joined the lines of convenient prison suicides. His two accomplices were luckier. One fine day in 1993 at the Brussels-St. Gilles prison, their guards left their cells unlocked. They quietly strolled away to freedom.

Behind such a carnival lay the revelations from a troop of witnesses that Vanden Boeynants frequently participated with judges, army officers, lawyers, businessmen and other élite figures, in orgies involving young children and acts of ghastly bestiality, including hunts where children were chased through the woods with Dobermans. PvB is dead, following a heart operation that went wrong. All that he knew about Belgium's depravities has usefully gone to the grave. Yet his legacy lives on, connecting him to almost every organisation spinning in the orbit of crime, neo-Nazi cults and the key figures in the secret army operations. In this domain we find the Public Information Office (PIO) which cropped up in 1974. In a sense, the name was an appropriate pun on its actual task, to act as a sponsored private army headed by one Major Jean-Marie Bougerol. He was a member of SDRA-8 - heart of the Belgian stay-behind network. He was also one of the chief suspects, alongside Vanden Boeynants, behind a projected Right-wing coup - the 'April Crisis' of 1973.

The intention was to evict the weak socialist government then in power. PIO was bidden to co-ordinate the coup and supervise all the hard work Gladio people would need to do. Vanden Boeynants was widely touted as NATO's choice as figurehead premier, and Bougerol as the brains. The plot was sufficiently advanced to have the country's armed forces standing on full alert, before the order came from the Ministry of Defence - and, some say, the royal palace - to pull back. It

was a precipice moment. The government tottered on for another year before the matter was settled at the ballot box. In March 1974, the dependable and solidly pro-NATO Flemish Bilderberger Leo Tindemanns emerged as premier, following the election that tilted the country firmly to the Right.

Bougerol seemed ideal for the task of masterminding the coup. He enjoyed high patronage, and he specialised in all kinds of sabotage and secret operations. From this scarcely veiled front for NATO, Bougerol gave orders to the head of the Front de la Jeunesse, one Francis Dossogne. Bougerol busied himself in other ways, turning up as an instructor at training camps deep in the Ardennes forests run by the French and Flemish neo-Nazi militias. He was assisted by commandos from regular Belgian army units. The major travelled around extensively with other members of the Gladio network, and was noted at various times conferring with his opposite numbers in Italy, Greece and Portugal, and especially in the Netherlands and France. He had the air of a senior staff officer or even an ambassador enjoying important responsibilities.

PIO also reached into the pockets of big business, including immensely secretive Belgian banks. Just as the Nihoul network washed its sex traffic and narcotics haul through numbered anonymous accounts in obliging Belgian banks, so the CIA - and Lemnitzer's ever-shadowing DIA - used the same route to clean up the funds collected from the dope industry. How much money travelled from the private commercial world to the secret subterranean state in these times will never be established. But there are important clues. The strange tale of the Wackenhut Corporation and its role in Belgium is one of these.

It was started as a private security operation in Florida in the 1950s by a rough diamond called George Wackenhut, whose personal opinions belonged so far to the Right he left Senator Joe McCarthy in the shade. The FBI took him on as a special agent to spy on suspected Left-wing subversives. Enshrined in his own business, he never gave up the habit. From the outset, it was stuffed with ex-FBI and CIA cronies, including one really big cheese, Frank Carlucci - former deputy director of the CIA, Reagan's adviser on national security and later defense secretary 1987-89. The Wackenhut outfit followed Lemnitzer to Belgium, where it was soon working for the local military and NATO. Wackenhut also drew for some of its employees on the Westland New Post paramilitaries. One of these was a known bomber and hit man, the Frenchman Jean-François Calmette, a notorious veteran of the OAS rebellion against de Gaulle and close conspirator of Yves Guérin-Sérac. He was director of the Belgian division of Wackenhut up until 1981, while doubling as senior Westland New Post commander. These were curious relationships for such a prominent businessman in the security business. Among his more exotic activities was looking after security for a lavish tinselled Christmas gala, the ultimate fantasy of a Gladio Ball staged in a swank Brussels hotel. The guests at what was officially a Vanden Boeynants party read like a VIP Who's Who of the Belgian secret state. Beneath the sparkling chandeliers, a Belgian industrialist's consort was as likely to take the floor with a member of a NATO-sponsored street gang as a high-flying army officer.

In 1982, Barbier was assigned as a Wackenhut security guard to the synagogue on the Rue de la Régence in Brussels. During his watch, it mysteriously blew up. The plans of the building were later found in Barbier's home. This same Marcel Barbier was later discovered to be a

close personal associate of Paul Latinus, effectively his deputy. The plot thickened. Security duties agreed with the Belgian army involved the strange melting away of Wackenhut security patrols during a number of incidents in which these bases were supposedly 'attacked' by revolutionary forces. In every case, these Strategy of Tension assaults were mounted by paramilitary units, with Westland New Post to the fore. On occasion they were directly supported by US army units, as when a troop from US special forces flew in from Fort Bragg and parachuted into the Ardennes. They hid up for a few days, and then with the aid of local SDRA-8 people, shot up a gendarmerie post in the small town of Vielsalm, killing one officer. On another occasion, a similar US-led raid on an army barracks was supposedly pulled on 'higher orders' from Brussels. The Americans (DIA paramilitaries or perhaps members of some other ultra-secret Pentagon unit) continued to cruise the neighbourhood camouflaged in civilian clothes, and then went in on their own to attack the barracks, leaving two more fatalities and a dozen injured.

In the mid-1980s, Wackenhut closed down in Belgium, amid reports of marching orders from the Ministry of Defence. It may have been that things got too hot for comfort, and the chief clients wanted the show out of town. Judged in the light of later events, Wackenhut's activities in Belgium anticipated mercenary activities by trigger-happy private security contractors of several decades later, notably the infamous Blackwater outfit.

The supermarket massacres (rather a misnomer, since a wide range of shops and restaurants were attacked, including typically Jewish-owned targets such as jewellers) all occurred during the early '80s, during NATO's roll-out of manoeuvrable, nuclear-tipped American

cruise missiles across Europe. NATO was taken aback by the strength of public opposition in Belgium. The socialists found themselves with such a strong and galvanising populist groundswell they began to tout the idea of leaving NATO. The Belgian parliament, which subsequently investigated the attacks, concluded with unusual cross-linguistic support that purely criminal explanations advanced by the gendarmerie were absurd. On one occasion, a sack of looted money was discovered tossed in a stream. Bank robbers are rarely so charitable.

No logical criminal purpose could ever be adduced. The special Paramilitary Inquiry concluded it was a false-flag exercise, controlled by the hand of the state to sow confusion and fear among the populace. Voters would be prompted to flock to a Right-wing, law-and-order orientated government which would muzzle opponents of the missile programme. In short, the classic Strategy of Tension ploy. Rumours of involvement in the Brabant/ Nivelles imbroglio persistently swirled around the debonair figure of the part-Algerian secret policeman Madani Bouhouche, who worked for the national gendarmerie's BOB special investigations unit. He doubled these tasks with a closet role at Westland New Post. The X-File investigators believe that Madani Bouhouche belonged to a group of neo-Nazi officers in the gendarmerie who were responsible for 'a terror extortion campaign' connected to the *ballets roses*, the so-called 'pink ballet' juvenile sex orgies. Bouhouche drove a fast BMW which some of the victims claimed he used to take them to a factory just outside Brussels, where they were systematically abused, and some victims murdered. In 1982 he was arrested on a charge of murdering an Algerian gun-runner. Shortly afterwards Bouhouche's friend and fellow militant Jean Bultot shot off to Paraguay (that popular sanctuary for Nazis), where he informed a pursuing

newshound from *Le Soir* that every single incident had taken place with the help of the state 'at the highest levels.' Bouhouche was eventually convicted for the murder of the Algerian arms salesman and the later killing of a diamond dealer. Released on parole, he rented a cottage in a remote part of the French Pyrenees. In November 2005 he managed to behead himself while cutting wood with a chain-saw.

On 29th May 1985, television pictures flashed around the world told the story of a bloody massacre at the Heysel football stadium in the Flemish-dominated outskirts of Brussels, long a dominion of neo-Nazi thugs and skinheads. An encounter between the European Cup titans Liverpool and Juventus finished in one of the worst riots in the history of the game, leaving the bodies of 39 Italian fans crushed to death on the terraces, and dozens more injured. What happened that day at Heysel bore all the signs of a deliberately incited, designer riot. But now as the football world mourned, it was time to beckon on the usual scapegoats. Knee-jerk reactions placed the blame squarely on Liverpool supporters. Margaret Thatcher, who intrinsically despised anything tainted by socialist Merseyside, led the charge. British football was instantly banished from Europe, while Liverpool FC found itself the subject of odium for years to come over the alleged behaviour of its supporters. There was some general muttering about the inadequacy of Belgian crowd control, but almost no one except Liverpool chief executive Peter Robinson noted the disturbing background to the catastrophe.

Robinson, an objective and thoughtful administrator, was puzzled how such a devastating riot could occur, when prior to kick-off, rival fans had been indulging in good-natured banter. His careful post-mortem included crucial evidence that nearly all the tickets had been

sold by Belgian sources, in defiance of the usual rigid precautions. Over-concentration of ticket sales in the hands of the host state is often a contributory factor to violence. Moreover, the usual strong police contingent expected for such a high-profile clash had been downgraded to little more than a handful of men. It would have taken a more skilled eye to note that the officers on the scene were not the customary gendarmes but men from the *Rijkswacht*, the élite military police force under the direct control of the Minister of Defence, one of the main components in the Gladio structure.

Robinson and the Juventus management had protested over the choice of Heysel, a structure so obviously run down and decrepit it was unfit to stage any public event. They were coldly over-ruled by the Belgian authorities. When the managers jointly proposed a security zone with strong barriers to isolate Juventus and Liverpool supporters, that suggestion too was tossed aside. In the end, the only crush barrier was a flimsy fence, against which both groups of heaving fans pressed. And finally, large amounts of seditious material, in the form of Nazi-type banners and even BNP [British National Party] literature, had apparently been stored inside the stadium and scattered around well in advance.

The BBC radio station in my Bristol constituency rang my apartment and asked me to file an eye-witness account of the aftermath. Aside from the scene of expected devastation in the wake of the deadly stampede, the most remarkable reactions came from local people, who spoke of a large contingent of Belgian skinheads who entered the stadium as kick-off time approached. Locals were astonished to see Rijkswacht officers, whose duties were well known to be reserved for the highest matters of state security. They concluded prominent VIPs

must be present. But other eyewitnesses noted how the senior commanders apparently not only expected the phalanx of skinheads, but were sufficiently acquainted with their leadership to get into 'smiling conversations.' One ordinary gendarme I found told me as he surveyed the shambles: 'This could only have been made to happen. Those people [the rival fans] were shunted so close together that it was like preparing a match for gunpowder. Then our skinheads were let into the ground and that was when the trouble started.' He shook his head and went on: 'It's like Brabant, Nivelles.' When the staff of my Brussels office tried to contact this same gendarmerie officer about a week later, giving the rank and serial number that I noted down, they were informed that no such person had ever served with the force.

Much was later made of the Juventus contingent taunting British fans with florid banners covered with Nazi insignia. There was some comment, however, in the Belgian media, that their design appeared to owe their cultural origins to paganistic Belgian skinhead gangs rather than Italian backgrounds. The one Italian connection that seemed clear involved a Juventus supporter who had been boasting to the home contingent he was 'with MSI' [the Italian post-fascist party]. He appeared shouting and firing a pistol at the height of the rioting. Despite being recognisably clear in the live TV coverage, that key figure was never arrested. MSI was an integral component of the Gladio and P2 structures in Italy. Nor was any official inquiry held into the 'spontaneous' Heysel riot. No authority in Belgium formally requested one. The British football authorities failed to demand an investigation, because they had been so utterly cowed by Thatcher for her own political ends. The searing shame, on the city as well as the club, was too great.

So how did the Strategy of Tension fit the Heysel disaster? The answer lay, as usual, in the national political geography. The unusually long-running government headed by Wilfried Martens, a dependable friend of NATO, was beginning to look susceptible to elections that could sweep in the socialists on the back of the missiles crisis. This was not the time, however, to lose such a strong ally in the home town of the alliance. What the country urgently needed was a good dose of unity, and it worked. Heysel fulfilled the answer. Here was an utterly cynical diversion designed to focus the country's voters away from the missiles affair, the growing pension crisis and accelerating economic woes, and of course, the rival attractions of the Left. Stupefied Belgians - preoccupied above all with the one uniting passion that holds this fragile country together, namely the national game - could think of nothing else but the tragedy. A semi-ruined soccer stadium, close to skinhead and neo-Nazi territory, skimmed of virtually any security precautions despite a high likelihood of friction between the protagonists, came straight out of Gladio central scripting. In a country where families were mown down while doing their shopping, children tortured to death in dark cellars or chased through the woods by ravenous dogs, Heysel fitted the black landscape of designer atrocities.

As the 1980's drew on, a series of storms erupted over kickbacks involving NATO defence contracts. A general who knew of links between huge US arms firms such as Lockheed Martin, leading Belgian politicians and the Royal family, was found dead in circumstances that pointed more to murder than the official claim of suicide. A really large head rolled when Willy Claes, former foreign minister and at the time Secretary General of NATO, was toppled in a kick-backs scandal involving Italian Augusta helicopters. The attention-diverting tactics of

Gladio instantly swung into play. The country reeled at the spectacle of violent attacks on armoured cash trucks by raiders armed with military bazookas, assault rifles and battering rams and - echoes from the earlier Brabant/ Nivelles Gang business - random murders committed in supermarkets and parking lots. Special attention was reserved for American business symbols and installations linked to NATO. Blame was pinned on a terror group, the *Cellules Communistes Combattantes* (CCC), whose chief architect - Pierre Carette, bearing all the credentials of a convenient patsy - was eventually jailed for attacking all these standard temples. The Strategy of Tension carpet was rolled out once again.

1991 was to prove another of those years when momentous events occurred in the Gladio calendar, pointing to something extremely sinister beneath the covers of the state. André Cools, a significant figure in the vastly corrupted Walloon socialist party, and an ex-deputy premier, suddenly threatened to blow the whistle on links to secret funding and worse, implicating people in high places. He was almost immediately assassinated, in a drive-by shooting in Liège in July that year. Cools was tainted by the Italian Agusta helicopter bribes affair, and implicated in the mysterious disappearance of millions of dollar bonds supposedly in safe transit at Brussels airport. Unquestionably, Cools - a characteristically corrupted and vain Belgian politician with much to hide - was being blackmailed, and decided that if he was going down with the ship, then he would take all hands with him. The newspapers were engrossed at precisely this moment with the widely suspected links between prominent Belgian politicians and the stories of sordid sex trafficking. [\[58\]](#)

The Flemish newspaper *De Standaard* pitched with delight on the Walloon socialist organisation. It was portrayed as the centre-piece of a sprawling web of corruption linking big business, major banks, insurance firms and construction companies, with many ties to crime networks. What the paper could not say was how much money the party (and its leaders individually) banked directly from NATO slush funds. Cools may have intended to discuss the matter *en plein air*. Witnesses who escaped the Nihoul sadistic orgy circuit often cited Cools as a regular participant, which adds force to his statements just before his death that he was about to make some 'shocking revelations' about the Belgian mafia, and their links to some of the most important people in Liège.

By early 1997, Dutroux was practically a footnote in the scandal tearing at the foundations of the rickety state. Besides a whole range of petty criminals, secret investigations were being opened up against an ever-lengthening list of politicians, bankers, police officers, magistrates and officials in the international agencies. It was only after a number of subtle changes in the chain of command that the important work could begin, of shutting down all these dangerous inquiries in the weeks and months after Dutroux was arrested. All the powers of the establishment were set loose, including state radio and television networks, to isolate Dutroux as a one-off, isolated pervert, demolish the stories of a national sex and sadism circuit, and not least clear Nihoul of all incriminating charges. In an especially despicable episode, a young woman called Regina Louf, who came forward to testify she had seen her closest girlfriend murdered at one of Nihoul's wretched parties, was traduced by official spinners and investigating magistrates as an insane liar.^[59] The police interrogating team was sacked and replaced by another,

which tossed out all her charges. Another side of the same force raided a decrepit mushroom farm specified by Louf and found the dead girl's remains in exactly the circumstances she described, roped and tied so that she asphyxiated herself during excruciating torture for the amusement of onlookers. It is hard to credit a political system with the slightest perception of civilisation when it refuses to bring the perpetrators of such a horror to justice, particularly when they are known to the authorities. The innocents of a misfit country drown in the ordure of its criminalised élites. Dutroux was also present at this ghastly spectacle, according to Louf. He remained a nagging problem - too visible to assassinate, the customary remedy. He returned to the headlines a second time, having first been arrested in February 1986 and convicted two years later for the gruesome kidnapping, photographing, torturing and raping of five girls between the age of 11 and 19. Due to his intimacy with the police and previous inquiries, Dutroux was known long before that as a manipulative psychopath, devoid of morality. However, in Belgium, well-behaved convicts often serve a third, sometimes less, of already low sentences, relative to other EU states. So he was soon back on the streets. Incredibly he managed to secure a handsome state pension by convincing a government psychiatrist that his prison sentence rendered him mentally unfit for work.^(N4)

When he was in trouble once again in 1996, it transpired key police officers knew he was snatching young female victims to order, who were then subjected to sadistic horrors practised in the dungeons of his slum dwellings scattered around Charleroi, or dragged around the vice circuit. But no one moved against him. As many later reports clearly established, his largely accidental exposure tipped the Belgian

establishment into a tailspin. At all costs it was essential to divert the public gaze away from the paedophile network organised around Nihoul, the ringmaster, and beam the spotlight instead on Dutroux, who would act the sacrificial scapegoat. This much became blatantly obvious as the glacial Belgian legal system dragged its heels ever more slowly. The trial was a grotesque charade. Vital evidence, especially any that pointed to Nihoul, was lost or stifled before it came to court. The initial investigating magistrate, Jean-Marc Connerotte, was feted as a national hero when he personally rescued two more kidnapped victims from Dutroux's cellars. Then, on the specious grounds of taking an informal meal with some of the victims' families, he was dismissed from the case as 'biased.' When the trial finally began and Connerotte was summoned as a material witness, he railed against the bullet-proof cars required to protect him from the vengeance of the secret state.

Despite the worldwide outcry, for almost three years the state system lost virtually all interest in Dutroux and his crimes. It turned its main attention to discrediting the annoyingly persistent Connerotte and his legal career. This required instructions from the highest quarters of the state. The authorities were playing for time, gambling that the attention span of the public would fade away, once the case and its lurid claims disappeared from the headlines. To ensure national amnesia, no less than nine crucial witnesses met violent ends.

* *François Reyskens*: in July 1995, on his way to a police appointment to present evidence concerning two of Dutroux's victims, he fell under a train.

* *Bruno Tagliaferro*, an ironmonger in Charleroi and acquaintance of Dutroux, who declared he had a compromising list of names connected

to Dutroux. In November 1995, he was found dead, supposedly from a stroke. Forensic evidence indicated poison.

- * His wife *Fabienne Jaupart* demanded a fresh autopsy. A little while later, her charred body was discovered on a smouldering mattress, doused with inflammable liquid.

- * In August 1995, *Guy Goebels*, a police inspector investigating the deaths of two young Dutroux victims, supposedly shot himself with his service revolver.

- * *Simon Poncelet*, the police inspector investigating Dutroux's car swindles, was found shot in February 1996.

- * In 1996, *Anne Konjevoda* called police to say she had crucial information linking the kidnappings and the stolen car racket in Charleroi. She was never interviewed. In April 1998, her body was fished from the canal in Liège. She had been strangled.

- * *Brigitte Jennart*, Nihoul's friend and personal dentist, reportedly killed herself in April 1998. Jennart was arguably among the most important of the deceased witnesses, because she intended to reveal Nihoul's involvement in deals with African asylum seekers that involved child trafficking.

- * *Jean-Marc Houdmont*, another acquaintance of Marc Dutroux, died in a car crash in February 1997 en route to testify in court against Dutroux.

- * And finally, *Hubert Massa*, chief prosecuting attorney of the investigation into Dutroux and the lead investigator into the 1991 murder of André Cools, 'shot himself' on 12th July 1999.

In March 2004, the German state television channel ZDF suggested that as many as 27 people with important evidence concerning the vice, blackmail and extortion rings had been killed, committed suicide or

disappeared in suspicious circumstances. At a trial crowded with hundreds of reporters, Dutroux was convicted for kidnapping, the murder of two victims and manslaughter of two more (who starved in his dungeons while he was absent). At an earlier hearing, the element of farce overwhelmed the grimness of events when Dutroux, supposedly heavily guarded, 'slipped' his handcuffs in a feat of ingenuity worthy of Houdini and briefly escaped. The impression some keys belonging to warders played a role in this miracle was not lost on the media. The trial was another farce. In an unprecedented development, the jury formally protested at the presiding judge Stéphane Goux's behaviour, particularly in rushing victims' testimonies, without sufficient time for the evidence to sink in or allow for examination. Nihoul was excused all the paedophile charges and jailed solely for unrelated drug running. He was proved correct when he bawled to reporters he would never be convicted for sex trafficking. It was already public knowledge that he enjoyed protection in high places. These extended to convenient relationships with the judge investigating the Regina Louf allegations. Belgians concluded this was the end of the business and quite possibly the state itself.

Many of the figures who shuffled through the streets clad in white sheets eight long years before were unwitting extras in an act of politically inspired drama. There were many families on parade that day whose breadwinners were in the military or belonged to the vast government bureaucracy, drafted in to swell the numbers. To encourage mass attendance, the authorities ensured that railway tickets to Brussels were made available at discount fares. The hand behind the event belonged to the Belgian government itself, to all intents the intended target. The logistics of marshalling such a host called for

management and propaganda skills of a high order. The clouds of white balloons and shroud-like gowns, spirited apparently from nowhere, all pointed to an organising genius in the world of public events, not to mention the borrowed tactics of the Strategy of Tension. They bore witness to the theories of calculated 'swarming' created by American behavioural psy-ops expert Gene Sharp, long-time collaborator with American espionage services. The script was written to guarantee prime time worldwide TV material, a mass optical illusion whose sole purpose was to defuse a crisis. So it turned out. Ministers solemnly trooped before the cameras, wringing their hands, declaring 'we cannot ignore such a manifestation,' which nonetheless they did, once the great rally served its intended purpose of defusing public passions.

Belgians gave up with a weary sense of futility in trying to overcome the system. The Dutroux business guttered out like a dying candle, and many worried occupants of high places breathed a sigh of relief, after more than a decade of fearing the worst. No one else was called to account. The Belgian ship of state continued its steady passage towards the rocks.

Regina Louf's evidence strikes an eerie chord with the cluster of brainwashing and extreme drug experimentation programmes clustered around the CIA's top secret MK-Ultra program. Specifically, she points to the calculated de-humanising degradation employed to reduce a child victim like herself to abject obedience, no matter how horrific the acts she was ordered to perform or watch - including, she has claimed, human sacrifice. Drugs played a significant role, along with the satanic initiation ceremonies which the victims were encouraged to regard as a game - even a grim parody of a 'birthday party.' The techniques that Louf describes indicate sophisticated forms of mental

programming - otherwise known as brainwashing. MK-Ultra supposedly folded in the late 1960s, and all the incriminating documentation of maddened pseudo-science around it destroyed. But the sheer scale of depravity that overwhelmed Belgium may indicate that MK-Ultra - or some grisly nuts and bolts of it at any rate - survived as a kind of controlled experiment in a nation-sized real-life laboratory. Incredible? What is more incredible than the evidence assembled in this chapter, which is necessarily but a brief précis of the whole damning, heart-rending story of a deranged nation? In this light, the determination to discredit and destroy Regina Louf as a credible witness might acquire a far larger significance. Like the renowned Gurkhas, Belgian gendarmes may be relied upon to take few prisoners.