

# History of World War II. The Forgotten US-Nazi Alliance

After 1945 the US had no issues recruiting major Nazi war criminals: Men like Wehrmacht General Reinhard Gehlen and SS Captain Klaus Barbie.

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Global Research, July 19, 2020

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

This article was first published by Global Research on January 18, 2018

*As the Second World War advanced from its early stages, the United States was assessing which sections of the earth it would hold conquest over. American planners had to remain patient, however. A seemingly endless string of conquests for the Nazis had astonished the world – particularly those in the US – and led to Adolf Hitler being crowned as “the new Napoleon”.*

In the summer of 1942, under Hitler’s domineering command of the military, the Germans controlled vast swathes of Europe – from Warsaw to Oslo to Paris, and eastwards onto Athens, Kiev and Sevastopol. It was one major victory after another for the Third Reich, blighted by the narrow failure to take Moscow in late 1941 after a celebrated Russian counterattack, and the inability to gain air superiority over Britain.

Yet, by November 1942, Hitler had plunged deeper into Russian territory than even Napoleon in his pomp 130 years before. By this point, Nazi forces had killed many millions of Russians – much of whom were innocent civilians – in “a war of annihilation”, as Hitler had previously said.

Come early November [1942], 90% of Stalingrad had been taken by German infantry after weeks of fierce house-to-house fighting. The swastika was now flying over the tallest building in Stalingrad city centre. Such news prompted a buoyant Hitler [to say](#) in an after-dinner speech in Munich that,

“I wanted to take the place [Stalingrad], and you know, we’ve done it. We’ve got it really, except for a few enemy positions still holding out. Now they say, ‘why don’t we finish the job more quickly?’ Well, I prefer to do the job with quite small assault groups. Time is of no consequence at all”.

At this stage, American planners were preparing [with certainty](#) for a postwar world split up between the Third Reich and the leader of the Free World. The Nazis would control the whole of mainland Europe and Eurasia, while the US would command the Western Hemisphere, the Far East, and the former British empire. American imperialists gave this unprecedented sphere of conquest a title, “the Grand Area”.

The plans were soon altered, however. Despite Hitler’s assertions, time was catching up on

the Germans. Just days later Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Premier, orchestrated another famous counterattack with fresh reserves – smashing the overextended German lines. By November 23 the German 6<sup>th</sup> Army, which led the conquest over France in 1940, was completely encircled by superior forces.

Come the following year, 1943, it was increasingly clear to the Roosevelt administration that the Germans were heading towards defeat – which is precisely what unfolded two years later. Russia deserved the vast majority of credit for winning the Second World War – which is scarcely ever mentioned – yet Russia was almost destroyed in doing so, losing over 25 million people along with immeasurable damage to her infrastructure.

The US had not suffered invasion or bombing and in 1945 controlled a remarkable 50% of the world's wealth. The Grand Area was now to be expanded to control as much of Eurasia as possible too. The Americans had a problem to overcome, however – by war's end the anti-Nazi Resistance had become powerful and contained many Socialist and Communist elements. The traditional order had to be restored.

Resistance factions would not be conducive to American demands and were to be smashed. At this point, the US did not possess the knowledge of infiltration in breaking up undesirable organisations.

Yet there were those who did possess that ability: Nazi leaders who for years had been specialists in undermining the Resistance through covert techniques. Men like Wehrmacht General Reinhard Gehlen, who was head of German intelligence on the Eastern Front (1942-45), where the most atrocious crimes were perpetrated. The US further hired SS Captain Klaus Barbie – “the Butcher of Lyon” – who had performed a key role in destabilising the Resistance in the Netherlands, and from 1942 on, in Nazi-occupied France.

Gehlen himself [was initially](#) under the guidance of the US Army, before being overseen by the recently-formed CIA in 1949. Gehlen headed secret espionage activities against the Soviet Union as head of the so-called Gehlen Organisation – with hundreds of ex-Wehrmacht and SS intelligence officers under his command, all with American assurance.

A declassified CIA intelligence document [describes](#) him as, “the Master Spy, the Man of Mystery, Spy of the Century”. Later, for 12 years, Gehlen was the first president of the Federal Intelligence Service of West Germany (1956-1968) – and was also the highest ranking reserve officer in the West German military, before being forced into retirement in 1968.

Barbie, formerly of the SS and Gestapo, was recruited by the US Army's Counterintelligence Corps in 1947 – historians estimate he bears direct responsibility for the deaths of up to 14,000 people. He was accountable for other crimes such as the widespread use of torture, and the [deportation](#) of Jewish children to Auschwitz.

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*This article was originally published by [The Duran](#).*

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