

Operation Gladio: The Untold Story of the Unholy Alliance Between the Vatican, the CIA, and the Mafia

Review of Paul L. Williams Book

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by Arif Jamal

After the Second World War ended, The Vatican, the CIA, the ex-Nazis, and the Sicilian/American Mafia forged an alliance to fight the Cold War against the former Soviet Union and the rising pro-Soviet governments in Europe and the rest of the world.

In a new book, Paul L. Williams offers new and disturbing evidence to expose what he calls the unholy alliance. Operation Gladio is likely to be a controversial book and may even be contested by several quarters. However, it would be difficult to reject the evidence author Paul L. Williams has provided.

The story started as early as 1942 with the formation of the Vatican Bank. The same year ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) recruited Lucky Luciano, a pre-eminent drug lord. The Swiss director of the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Allen Dulles came to the conclusion, "We're fighting the wrong enemy." Schutzstaffel (SS) sent Dulles a message through the Vatican that the Nazi government wanted to establish a separate peace with the United States; they wanted to fight the Soviets. Dulles met Prince Max von Hohenlohe in Bern. Hohenlohe found Dulles in agreement with him. Later, Dulles also met other Nazi officials to forge the new alliance. Chief of Special Intelligence for the OSS in China Col. Paul E Helliwell thought of another unholy alliance between the US intelligence community and organized crime groups. Consequently, the US intelligence agencies got drug lord Lucky Luciano released from jail, allowed him to build his narcotic empire, and simply watched the flow of drugs into the largely black ghettos of New York and Washington. The unholy alliance of the American spies and criminals was replicated everywhere, from Laos and Burma to Marseilles and Panama.

After Richard Nixon became president in 1969, the strategy of tension gained more impetus. National Adviser Henry Kissinger issued orders to Licio Gelli to carry out terror attacks and coup attempts. The United States and the Vatican channeled millions of dollars for these operations. Most of the money was raised in questionable ways. The first major attack in Europe took place on December 12, 1969 when a bomb went off in the lobby of Banca Nazionale Dell' Agricoltura in Milan, Italy. Seventeen people died in the explosion. Within an hour, three bombs exploded in Rome. According to official figures, 14,591 acts of violence with a political motivation took place between January 1, 1969 and December 31,

1987. In these terror attacks, 491 people died and 1,181 were injured. A large number of terror attacks took place in other European countries from 1965 to 1981. After a series of assassination attempts to kill French President De Gaulle failed, he denounced “the secret warfare of the Pentagon” and expelled the European headquarters of NATO.



In the Latin America, the CIA and the Vatican launched Operation Condor as the Latin American version of the Operation Gladio. The label was applied very liberally by the US intelligence agencies that “any government risked being so labeled if it advocated nationalization of private industry (particularly foreign-owned corporations), radical land reform, autarkic trade policies, acceptance of soviet aid, or an anti-American foreign policy.” The CIA and the Vatican started Operation Condor in the early 1970s when Opus Dei elicited support from Chilean bishops for the overthrow of the government of President Allende. The Catholic group was closely working with the CIA-funded organizations such as the Fatherland and Liberty, which was later turned into the dreaded Chilean secret police. “In 1971, the CIA began shelling out millions to the Chilean Institute for General Studies (IGS), an Opus Dei think tank, for the planning of the revolution.” Many members of the IGS joined the government after the coup. Hernan Cubillos became the foreign minister. He was the founder of Que Pasa, an OPUS Dei magazine, and publisher of El Mercurio, the largest newspaper in Santiago which was subsidized by the CIA.



Williams shows that the Vatican was fully involved in Operation Condor. The Pope was fully behind the purging of the left wing clerics; leaders of the military junta were devout Catholics. The Vatican did not abandon General Pinochet even when he was arrested in Britain for the murder of thousands of Chileans. Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano wrote to the British government on behalf of the Pope to demand his release. Under Pinochet, hundreds of thousands Chileans had disappeared while more than four thousands had died. More than fifty thousand Chileans were tortured in the name of Catholic god. CIA’s dirty war was perpetuated in many Latin American countries with the help and blessing of the Vatican.

Williams quotes FBI whistle blower Sibel Edmonds who said,

“Between 1996 and 2002, we, the United States, planned, financed, and helped execute every major terrorist incident by Chechen rebels (and the Mujahideen) against Russia. Between 1996 and 20002, we, the United States, planned, financed, and helped execute every single uprising and terror related scheme in Xinjiang (aka East Turkistan and Uyhurstan). Between 1996 and 2002, we, the United States, planned and carried out at least two assassination schemes against pro-Russian officials in Azerbaijan.”

Operation Gladio is a highly well-researched book with some 1,100 endnotes and footnotes. This work is highly rich in details. It is an estimable scholarly and intellectual accomplishment which is unrivaled. His scholarly work fills a major lacuna in the study of the US foreign policy which was left by scholars such as Alfred McCoy, Peter Dale Scot, Martin A. Lee, Dale Yallop, and Sibel Edmonds.

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Paul L. Williams is a journalist and author of The Vatican Exposed, Crescent Moon Rising, The Day of Islam, Osama’s revenge, and the Al-Qaeda Connection. He has written articles for The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Counter-Terrorist, NewsMax, and National Review. He is the winner of three first-place Keystone Press Awards for journalism. He has also served as a consultant for the FBI and as an adjunct professor of Humanities at the University of Scranton and Wilkes University.

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