

STAT

CHARLESTON NEWS & COURIER (SC)  
22 March 1983

# Barbie's U.S. Connection

It is heartening to hear that Attorney General William French Smith has ordered an investigation by the Justice Department into allegations that Klaus Barbie, the former Nazi Gestapo leader who is facing trial for crimes against humanity in Lyon, France, following his extradition from his haven in Bolivia, worked for and was protected by U.S. intelligence agencies.

The charge came out of the blue from Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld, who claims that he has documentary proof that for five years authorities in the American zone consistently frustrated French efforts to bring Barbie to trial and that the CIA helped him flee to Bolivia in 1951.

Since then, three other men have come forward with stories of money paid to Barbie for working for U.S. intelligence which allegedly granted him protection. It has also been alleged that he paid a number of visits to the United States and Europe from Bolivia, presumably with the knowledge of his supposed protectors.

Barbie was a notorious killer, deservedly known as "the Butcher of Lyon" because of his key role in the torture and murder of members of the resistance and in the deportation of thousands of French Jews to Nazi concentration camps.

It is difficult to conceive of any situation in which such a man would be protected by U.S. intelligence. It is not impossible that the Allied intelligence services sought information from him when he was arrested in Germany at the end of the war, although it is questionable whether a man who spent most of his time as a torturer and executioner in France would know many Soviet secrets, as has been alleged. But it is important to establish the truth of these charges.

Because of their very nature, intelligence services can very easily become corrupted and sometimes serve the aims of the enemies they are supposed to protect us against. Quite frankly, Serge Klarsfeld's story sounds too much like a left-wing propaganda canard to be true. Two purposes may be served by carrying out an investigation into any American connection with Barbie. On one hand, another left-wing attempt at discrediting the United States may be exposed. On the other, if the worst turns out to be true, it will establish a case for a thorough housecleaning in the CIA and allied intelligence agencies to remove any lingering traces of philo-Nazism. The two extremes of totalitarian temperament, whether leftist veering to Marxist-Leninism, or right-wing bordering on Fascism, are equally venomous and alien to American democracy.