
The Barcelona Ciemen scandal

Support center for separatist terror exposed

by Katherine Kanter

The rumor that Licio Gelli, the former torturer in Mussolini's secret police and mastermind of the Propaganda-2 Freemasonic lodge, had taken refuge in the Benedictine monastery of St. Honorat, France, following his Aug. 11 "escape" from Swiss jail, came as no surprise to those who have observed the role of the Benedictine-created Ciemen—the International Escarre Center for Ethnic Minorities and Nationalities—in promoting separatist-terrorist activities in the Mediterranean.

Ciemen's official publications state that they do not respect the sovereignty of presently constituted nation-states, but that the real "nations" of Europe are determined by "ethnicities," that is, tribes, based on racial criteria. These tribes, such as the Kurds, the Armenians, the Slovenes of Yugoslavia, and the Sardinians, are in danger of "cultural genocide." Any and all means are permissible to protect the tribenations from the "imperialist state," a term frequently used in the group's Catalan-language publication, *Altres Nacions*.

Ciemen supports the organization Herri Batasuna, which openly, flagrantly, defends the Basque terrorist ETA, just as they defend the Sinn Fein. They are now working intensively with the environmentalist movements from all over the Mediterranean to unleash a continent-wide environmentalist-pacifist wave of violence when the Euromissiles are deployed this fall.

Ciemen was founded in 1975. The name Escarre in the organization's title is in honor of the ex-abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Montserrat near Barcelona. Abbot Escarre was exiled to Milan in the mid-1960s after publishing a series of articles against Franco and in favor of separatism for the area of northern Spain known as Catalan. Another monk, Aureli Argemi, accompanied him in his exile to Milan, where they quickly established contact with KGB-linked editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli—one of the most open advocates of terrorism in Italy, who was killed in 1972 when a bomb he was carrying exploded—and with the Basso family of ultra-

left socialists. Family head Lelio Basso in fact founded the Libyan-financed Lelio Basso Foundation in the very same abbey of Montserrat.

Historically, the abbey of Montserrat has functioned as the "spiritual" center for Catalan autonomism, which is now becoming open separatism. The present head of the Catalan government, Jordi Pujol, makes frequent "spiritual retreats" in Montserrat, while the Catalan Department of Culture, under Max Cahnerm, has supported the activities of the Ciemen in both Spain and France.

Safehouse in France

An important step in the organization's development was taken when Escarre and Argemi moved a group of "dissident" monks—dissident because they were separatist and not merely autonomist—from Montserrat to the French town of Prada near Perpignan. There they took up residence in a disused 9th-century Benedictine monastery called San Miguel de Cuxa, which serves as a kind of grand-scale safehouse for the European separatist movements. The location is ideal for such purposes as it is lost in mountains and woods, only 3 kilometers from the Spanish border and very near to the sea.

As the monks specialize in breeding dangerous German shepherd dogs, it is rather difficult to find out just who is living in the huge outbuildings, which can probably house about 200 persons. The monks claim they finance themselves selling Ying-Yang symbols and other ceramic amulets which appear to belong to a kind of pre-Christian cult. Strangely, the figure of Christ is absent from their artistic productions. A number of young female hippies circulate in the monastic residence, performing a variety of tasks for their masters.

War in the press

On Aug. 5, the Spanish-language newspaper *Diario de Barcelona* published a long article detailing the charges, previously made in the newspaper of Lyndon LaRouche's

French associates, *Nouvelle Solidarité*, characterizing the Ciemen as a terrorist front. On the following day, the same paper published a full-page article with the headline "The Ciemen Will Go to Court Against Those Who Accuse It of Terrorism—Argemi Rejects the Affirmations of *Nouvelle Solidarité*."

On Aug. 7, the president of the Ciemen, Felipe Sole y Sabaris, gave an interview to *El País*'s Barcelona edition (the most widely read paper in Spain), in which he took particular exception to the allegations that the Ciemen coordinated European armed groups with the Libyans. Ciemen's secretary, Angel Colom, also denied any link to the Berber tribe in Algeria, and both stated that they would like to be investigated by anyone who wishes to know the names of those behind the Ciemen and its finances, because they have nothing to hide. On Aug. 16, the widely read French daily *Quotidien de Paris* published an article by one of *Nouvelle Solidarité*'s editors, Thierry Lalevéé, on the Libyan connection and the Ciemen. This appeared on the very day that the Ciemen congress to unify the environmentalist movement with the separatist terrorist groups opened at San Miguel de Cuxa.

Then on Aug. 12 and 13, monk Argemi participated in a meeting in Corsica between the Corsican National Council, which is a front for the terrorist National Front for the Liberation of Corsica, and the Herri Bastasuna, the legalized arm of the Basque terrorist movement ETA. At this meeting, coordination of all the European separatist movements into a strike force against the "imperialist nation states" was discussed, according to a press conference given later by Herri Batasuna.

Benedictine origins

The central role of the Benedictine order in these activities is not surprising when one knows the history of this order. The Benedictines are an oriental order, the spiritual masters of which came from Alexandria, a former center of the Egyptian Isis cult. They are most closely related to Mount Athos and the Russian Orthodox Church, and in fact, the abbey of Montserrat helped to set up a branch of the Eglise Orthodoxe de France in Barcelona, led by an Alexandrian emigré. The Benedictines have always been a front for financial and land owning nobility, and it was they who introduced the feudal system into Spain. The program they wrote for the Occitan (French Provence) independence movement, founded in 1974, and called *Volem Viure al País* ("We Want to Live in Our Own Country"), is straight feudalism: flee urban civilisation, return Occitania to a rural order with leatherwork, stonework, and handicrafts as the main industries. Close down the Toulouse aeronautics industry as "French imperialist," and above all, through the independence movement, get control away from France of the important bauxite and uranium reserves of Occitania.

The Ciemen and all its abbeys must be closed. Many a machine gun can be hidden under a long robe.

Ciemen protests its innocence

The following are excerpts from an article in Diario de Barcelona of Aug. 5, 1983, by chief editor Jaime Reixach. Diario de Barcelona is the most widely read daily newspaper in Barcelona, though it maintains correspondent relations with such organizations as Die Tageszeitung in Berlin, a pro-terrorist daily paper. On Aug. 7 the regional Catalanian edition of El País ran the story as well and began to print vehement denials from the leadership of the Ciemen.

In an article entitled, "Qaddafi's Libya, the Mecca of Ecological Separatists and Other Terrorists," the French magazine Nouvelle Solidarité has accused the Escarre International Center for the Study of Ethnic Minorities (Ciemen) of being the enclave that connects armed movements from all over Europe, and including other continents, with Gen. [sic] Muammar Qaddafi. . . .

Nouvelle Solidarité describes the Escarre Center as an organization serving separatist groups from southern Europe and asserts that its offices in Barcelona, San Miguel de Cuxa, Paris, Milan, and Sicily were set up and financed by Qaddafi.

To back up this charge, the article, signed by Thierry Lalevéé, says that Ciemen is directly complicit in terrorist activities, particularly after observing activists from Ari and Grapo. . . .

Nouvelle Solidarité . . . is a weekly publication edited in Paris by an organization of the same name, which also puts out Executive Intelligence Review. . . . In recent months it has received harsh criticism from the German press, specifically from our correspondent in Berlin, Tageszeitung, which accused Nouvelle Solidarité of being a fascist organization which was introduced into Europe with direct CIA financing. . . .

Excerpts from a full-page article in the Aug. 6 Diario de Barcelona:

Members of the Secretariat of Ciemen as well as its secretary general, Aureli Argemi, have denied the charges made by Nouvelle Solidarité that their organization serves as a promoter of armed European groups. . . .

Argemi promised that the information appearing in said publication would be the object of a criminal suit. . . . The secretary general of the studies center has himself made available the objectives, plans, and sources of Ciemen's financing—"which are no more than its friends, members, and institutions with first and last names, and, in no case, foreign powers or political parties"—to anyone who wishes to see them. . . .