

Belgian police crackdown on CCC

by Dean Andromidas

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Recent arrests in Belgium of key leaders of the Communist Combatant Cells (CCC) are the first breakthrough in a case that has plagued Belgian and NATO authorities for 15 months.

Early last December, Belgian security police arrested four CCC members, including the top leader, Pierre Carrette, near the Central Station in the city of Namur. Their story, and evidence found at safehouses in Charleroi and elsewhere, give a detailed map of the interconnections between European and Mideast terrorist networks, and the legal and logistical support apparatus that makes them possible.

Carrette, 33, is the son of an active-duty Sureté officer and brother of a commando. While active among leftist and anarchist circles at the University of Brussels in 1972, he came into contact with lawyer Michael Graindorge, who established the first support committees in Belgium for Red Army Faction prisoners in West Germany. Carrette made several trips to Germany with Graindorge, contacting lawyer Klaus Croissant, who spent several years in prison himself for his terror support activities.

The heady atmosphere of the revolutionary West scene, the most dangerous on the continent, no doubt had a strong influence. In 1978, he founded the Red Commune printing company in a Brussels suburb, and with his low rates, won contracts for printing literature for all political parties. In 1979, he was arrested in Switzerland on a weapons smuggling charge, but released. That same year, a rocket attack was launched against NATO Supreme Commander Alexander Haig. It is now believed that Carrette was involved. In 1982, he founded a new printing shop and a glossy weekly, *Subversion*, which revealed details of the Haig attempt, and carried terrorist communiqués. The board included Didier Chevolet, Pascale Vandegeerde, and Bertrand Sasso, all arrested with Carrette last December.

In 1982, he was involved in an auto accident in the North of France; his co-passenger was Nathalie Menignon, leader of France's Direct Action terrorists.

Carrette's cell had yet to go underground, for they had not yet conducted an act of violent terror. In 1984, that changed: There was a gun battle in a Brussels street involving Direct Action members. Carrette was among them, and went

underground. Ms. Pascale Vandegeerde became the editor of *Ligne Rouge*, *Subversion's* replacement. Chevolet and Sasso joined Carrette.

Their first bombings occurred in October 1984, and thereafter, they hit multinational corporations, conservative parties and institutes, as well as important NATO oil pipelines, indicating access to sensitive military information, i.e., contacts with East bloc intelligence. The same explosives stolen by the CCCs from a quarry south of Brussels were used for Direct Action and RAF bombings in Paris and Munich. They also participated in bombings and thefts of explosives in nearby Luxembourg.

A possible connection with Nazi-communist circles surfaced in early 1985 when fascist pro-Soviet figure Jean Thiriart, with strong Arab terrorist ties, claimed he was being investigated for connections to the CCCs.

Until 1985, despite conducting more bombings than any other European terrorist group, the CCCs had yet to be "bloodied." This soon changed, when a bombing on the Rue de Soles on May 1, 1985, destroyed the Brussels offices of AEG-Telefunken and the Atlantic Assembly, leaving two firemen dead. According to reports, the inner core of CCC until then was composed of French Direct Action members, but the May 1 bombing inaugurated Carrette and his "second circle" into the select international fraternity of murderers and assassins. The evidence suggests that after this, preparations were afoot for kidnappings, assassinations, and bombings aimed at the indiscriminate taking of human life. In the last sweep by the Sureté, documents were found that indicate preparations for either the assassination or kidnapping of the ministers of justice and interior, and Albert Frère, chairman of Group Brussels Lambert.

The generation of 1968

According to a new book, *La Belgique Etranglée* by Jacques Offergeld and Christian Souris, Belgium has long been a sort of neutral territory where terrorists from the all over the world could congregate to traffic in guns and drugs with virtual impunity, so long as they did no undue harm to Belgian society. This state of affairs depended on the so-called "generation of 1968"—the radicalized students of the late 1960s and early 1970s at the Free University of Brussels. Some, like Carrette, were to go underground, while others found themselves holding high positions in the government. One protected the other.

Take the case of Socialist parliamentarian Philippe Mourreaux, one-time lecturer at the Free University. One of his students, Philippe Busquin, became an interior minister. It was Monsieur Mourreaux who, as himself interior minister in the previous Socialist-dominated government, was accused of responsibility for the loss of 15,000 files from the security services, including those used by Carrette. This was later cited to explain the inability of the Sureté to break the CCC case sooner. Mourreaux remains a leading Socialist deputy.