

Bonn Spy Network Is Riddled by Soviet

By ARTHUR J. OLSEN

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BONN., July 11—Testimony in a Karlsruhe courtroom this week has tarnished the vaunted reputation of the West German espionage apparatus officially known as the Federal Intelligence Agency once headed by its founder, Reinhard Gehlen, a former Wehrmacht general.

Three of General Gehlen's operatives are on trial before the Federal Constitutional Court, charged with 10 years of conscientious labor on behalf of the Soviet Union.

All three—Heinz Felfe, 45 years old; Hans Clemens, 61, and Erwin Tiesel, 60—have admitted systematic betrayal of the agency, known popularly as "the Gehlen organization."

Their work was so satisfactory that shortly before their

arrest Mr. Felfe and Mr. Clemens received simultaneous citations for 10 years' meritorious service—a plaque bearing a representation of St. George slaying the dragon—from General Gehlen and a letter of commendation plus a cash bonus from Alexander N. Shelepin, chairman of the Soviet Committee for State Security.

The three have admitted delivering 15,000 photographs of Gehlen files and other documents plus 20 spools of tape recordings to Soviet contacts in East Berlin.

At the time of his arrest, Mr. Felfe was a director of the East Division of the agency, the department responsible for espionage operations in Eastern Europe.

In prison awaiting trial, Mr. Felfe managed to continue regular reports to his Soviet friends. These presumably chronicled General Gehlen's progress in uncovering Soviet penetration of his agency.

This seems to have been a considerable task. One of the accused testified in Karlsruhe that he had been urged by the Russians to seek a transfer because there was a surplus of Soviet agents in his department.

The revelations have touched off demands in the press and in political quarters for an investigation of the intelligence agency. The Government has conceded that General Gehlen's personnel policies might be questionable.

C.I.A. Created Organization

The United States Central Intelligence Agency created the Gehlen organization.

General Gehlen, a regular officer in the prewar Reichswehr, made his reputation as an intelligence man on the Russian front during World War II. As head of the intelligence section of the Army High Command, he produced situation reports on the Soviet armies that are said to have emerged in postwar reviews as spectacularly accurate.

As the war ended, General Gehlen went underground, emerging to approach Gen. George S. Patton, then commander of the United States Third Army, with an offer to cooperate with the victors. The former lieutenant general of the Wehrmacht supported his job application with a promise to turn over his hidden archives.

The newly created C.I.A., having studied its recruit for months, authorized him in 1947 to establish a full-scale German intelligence organization. General Gehlen staffed his agency largely with professionals from the disbanded S.S. (Elite Guard) security service and the Wehrmacht intelligence agencies.

Mr. Felfe, who formerly was with the Reich Head Security Office and was then awaiting possible war-crimes prosecution, was, for example, abruptly submitted to denazification proceedings. A British Zone court classified him in Group 5, that is, "absolutely clean."

Close C. I. A. Tie Remains

The C.I.A. operated the Gehlen organization as a subdivision for eight years. In 1955 it was turned over to the West German Government, but the two organizations' ties remain intimate.

The agency reports directly to the Federal Chancellor. Its budget is not made public, but its payroll is reliably reported to exceed 4,000 regular employees.

The main headquarters is in Pullach, a suburb of Munich. Numerous branch offices throughout West Germany are disguised as business concerns.

The organization functions both at home and abroad, in Western countries as well as within the Soviet bloc.

In 1958 a political squall blew up in Bonn when it was convincingly reported that General Gehlen was tapping 5,000 telephones in the capital area, but he rode out the storm.

Now 61 years old, West Germany's master spy avoids the public gaze and keeps clear of the political community in Bonn. Only one old photograph of him is generally available.

It has leaked out that he likes hiking in the Bavarian Alps and listening to classical music.



Camera Press-Pix

REPUTATION AT ISSUE: Reinhard Gehlen, a former German general, as he appeared in World War II. Three men of his West German intelligence agency are on trial for espionage in behalf of the Soviet Union.

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