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Edwin L. SIBERT

Gehlen Reins Tight in Bonn Spy Unit

By the Associated Press

Munich, Germany

A whitewashed wall rings a wooded estate in a fashionable Munich suburb.

This is about all the outsider sees of the tightly guarded and mystery-laced headquarters of the Bundesnachrichtendienst—the German Federal Intelligence Service, or BND for short.

A more popular label is Gehlen Organization, named after its leader who set up the espionage network under American auspices when the cold war broke up the World War II alliance.

Former Lt. Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, in the business for more than 20 years, has an outfit of perhaps 4,000 men. Recently they have weathered an unprecedented onslaught of public criticism.

Target of Attacks

His agency became the target of violent attacks after a senior official, Heinz Felte, was convicted as a Soviet agent in West Germany's biggest spy trial since the war.

Court testimony at Karlsruhe disclosed Felte and a codefend-

Nazi era were both intelligence ant, Hans Clemens, during the officials of the SS-controlled Reich Security Head Office—which also employed Adolf Eichmann. Clemens admitted that he took part in the shooting of 330 Italian hostages.

Leaders of both opposition and government parties urged that the outfit be given a thorough going over. Newspapers spoke of a "Nazi nest in Munich." Some politicians clamored for merging BND with the two other German intelligence organizations.

Agency Upheld

These are the Defense Ministry's military screening service, a counterintelligence corps, and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which is a sort of German FBI limited to the "political" field—meaning it chases Nazis and Communists.

The government took things in stride. The Federal Chancellor, to which General Gehlen is immediately attached, let it be known that "far less than 1 percent" of the Gehlen staff formerly were in SS ranks (Blackshirts).

What is more, officials said, the fact that Felte and Clemens were traced down by the Gehlen people themselves—in 1961—showed the agency's efficiency.

It now appears that General Gehlen has emerged from the hubbub, an indication of the confidence he has built up in Bonn—and with the Western allies—for his organization over 16 years.

In Spy Field Since '42

General Gehlen first got into the espionage field in 1942 when he took over as head of the German Army's "Foreign Armies East" department, assigned to collect information on buildups in the rear of the Soviet Army front. His unit was associated with the military intelligence service of the legendary Admiral Wilhelm Canaris but did not get involved in Admiral Canaris's fall as an anti-Nazi plotter.

Admiral Canaris was executed in a Nazi concentration camp, and his service came under SS control. General Gehlen preserved his independence and impressed his superiors by the precision of his surveys.

Col. Gen. Heinz Guderian, last German Army Chief of Staff, recalls in his memoirs that he warned Hitler on Christmas Eve, 1944, of an impending general Soviet offensive.

"This is the greatest bluff since Genghis Khan," Hitler snapped. "Who dug up that nonsense?"

'Nonsense' Proved Fact

The "nonsense" was General Gehlen's, and, as General Guderian recounts, "his forecast turned out to be right."

When the war ended, General Gehlen possessed a wealth of data copied in triplicate and carefully stowed away in secret places. It is said that he got in touch with Gen. Edwin L. Sibert, then assistant director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

United States Gen. George S. Patton, sensing early East-West tension, reportedly sent General Gehlen to the United States where the German agreed to set up a new spy organization, provided he got a free hand in picking his staff.

The Gehlen organization was headquartered provisionally in the wooded Spessart mountains south of Frankfurt in 1947 and eventually moved to Pullach, a suburb of Munich. The Americans spent many millions on it before it was put under German control as a Bonn government agency in 1955.

Budget Mounts

The Bonn budget allocations for General Gehlen have mounted steadily, from \$7.25 million in 1957 to \$14.5 million in 1963.

The fire General Gehlen's outfit draws from Eastern bloc propaganda gains is an indication that BND ticks the Soviets.

Scores of Gehlen agents have been jailed by Communist courts. Moscow-led news conferences have been told of murder and torture as alleged Gehlen weapons.

General Gehlen himself appears the most elusive part in his secrecy-shrouded organization. The only press photograph clearly showing his lean, unsmiling face dates to World War II.

Scholarly Appearance

People who claim to know him off duty say he is a scholarly man of slight build with a clipped blond moustache. They say he always carries a gun, continually changes his incognito and his automobiles, but that on holiday his family car often pulls a trailer or a sailing boat out of a home on Lake Starnberg.