

Sep 24
1971

Despite his penchant for secrecy, aliases and bulletproof cars, and his aversion to photographers and public appearances, his notoriety as a superspy has always made General Reinhard Gehlen a controversial figure. As head of German military intelligence on the Eastern Front during World War II, Gehlen so infuriated Hitler with his precise predictions of Soviet victories that *der Führer* ordered him sent to an insane asylum. Instead, he fled to the Bavarian Alps, and later made a deal with the invading Americans: 50 cases of secret data on the Red Army in return for U.S. financial and political backing for what became Bonn's post-war espionage organization, the BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*). An obsessive anti-Communist, Gehlen helped plot some of the crucial undercover moves of the cold war. But the shadowy chief of German intelligence was forced into retirement at the age of 66 in 1968, partly because two of his aides were found to be Soviet double agents. Now Gehlen has again stirred up a controversy—this time with his forthcoming memoirs, *Der Dienst* (The Service).

Hated and Feared. The book is said to have brought \$175,000 for its serialization, starting last week in the West German newspaper *Die Welt*, and over \$500,000 has reportedly been bid by a group of book publishers led by the World Publishing Co. in New York. Gehlen claims to have known about the Berlin Wall before it went up, to have been aware of plans for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia before it occurred, and to have correctly predicted the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. Perhaps his most startling assertion is that missing Nazi War Criminal Martin Bormann was really a Soviet agent who died in the Soviet Union less than three years ago.

A more shadowy figure than Gehlen himself, *Reichsleiter* (National Leader) Bormann rose from an obscure fund raiser for the Nazi Party to become the second most powerful official of the Third Reich. The short, stocky Bormann was Secretary to the Führer, Director of the Party Chancellery, and one of the most hated and feared men in Hitler's Germany.

After he replaced Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess in 1941, he exercised virtual control over everyone Hitler saw and everything Hitler read. As executor of Hitler's estate, he was the first to enter the room in the *Führerbunker* after Hitler's suicide. Turning the government over to Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, Bormann fled the bunker on the night of May 1, 1945, in an attempt to slip through the tightening Soviet ring of tanks and troops only 300 yards away. Somewhere between the bunker and Friedrichstrasse Station, Martin Bormann vanished.

... mystery surrounding Bormann began. At the 1945-46 Nuremberg trials, when Bormann was sentenced to death *in absentia* for his war crimes, two men claimed that he died on the night of May 1 before reaching the Friedrichstrasse Station. But his corpse was never found, and four weeks later his voice was reportedly heard over a secret radio station in Stockholm, triggering rumors that have not yet ceased.

Since January 1946, there have been reports of sightings of Bormann from a dozen or more countries. In 1954 he was officially declared dead by a West German court, but in 1964 the War Crimes Office in Frankfurt, obviously convinced he was still alive, posted a \$28,000 reward for Bormann's capture. Meanwhile, Nazi Hunter Simon Wiesenthal claimed in *The Murderers Among Us* that Hitler's deputy had been smuggled out of Germany to South America by the Nazi underground escape organization. Wiesenthal said that on several occasions Bormann was seen nightclubbing with "the Mad Doctor of Auschwitz," Josef Mengele, who is now hiding in the jungles of Paraguay. Later, according to Wiesenthal, Bormann set up a colony of ex-Nazis in Argentina near the mountain town of Bariloche, where he remains today at the age of 71, well protected by thugs and armed guards.

High-Level Leak. What, then, of Gehlen's allegations in *Die Welt* that Hitler's alter ego was a Soviet agent, rescued that fateful night in 1945 by Red Army soldiers and whisked off to the U.S.S.R. to continue his anti-German work? It is an established fact that there was a high-level leak of Nazi secrets to the Soviets. According to the first installment of Gehlen's memoirs, both he and his *Abwehr* (Army counter-intelligence) superior, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, "came to the conviction that the Soviets must have at their disposal a well-informed intelligence source at the top of the German leadership," and that this source was Bormann. Gehlen says that he received two dependable reports in the 1950s that "Martin Bormann lived perfectly covered and protected in the Soviet Union" after the war and later information that he had died there. But Gehlen's first installment provides sparse proof for his allegations.

Hitler's successor, Admiral Dönitz, now 80, called the Gehlen theory "complete nonsense." Tass described it as a

tempt for an East-West *détente* in Europe. Certainly the manuscript, which contains a detailed analysis of Soviet political and military goals for the next two decades and calls for a parallel build-up of Western military strength, can only be welcomed by foes of Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. That would include *Die Welt* Owner Axel Springer, whose criticism of the Brandt government borders on frenzy. Gehlen's memoirs could also be an over-dramatized effort at self-justification.

For all that, there is at least some support for Gehlen's astonishing thesis. A 1947 book called *Who Killed Hitler?* states: "Russian intelligence reported Bormann under arrest, a prisoner of the Red Army in the Berlin area in early July 1945—two months after Berlin's capture!" An International News Service story in 1950 quotes Wilhelm Hoettl, a Nazi secret service expert, as saying that Bormann and other former German officials were running a bureau in the U.S.S.R. to "reorganize Germany, East and West, along the lines of a people's democracy."

Cornelius Ryan, author of *The Last Battle*, said in a 1966 interview that a German general "told me he once had a secret meeting with Hitler, with Bormann the only other man present. Hitler gave orders about a change in command on the Eastern Front. Within two hours the Russian radio broadcast the names of the generals who would be replaced, who would take over, and specific details on new strategy."

Skeptics and Questioners. Top Allied intelligence sources in Germany are skeptical. They wonder why Gehlen did not turn over the information he had to the West German government, if he indeed had real evidence Bormann was a Soviet spy. The War Crimes Office in Frankfurt has announced that once the book is published, it will call Gehlen in for questioning, particularly since his intelligence agency was never able to unearth any clues to Bormann's whereabouts. Bonn officials are also studying the possibility that Gehlen may have broken the law by not making evidence in his possession available to the government.

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